

In lieu of a traditional introduction letter, we asked Good Trouble's spiritual adviser REVEREND BILLY of the CHURCH OF STOP SHOPPING to compose a special sermon for you, our flock, in this wretched year of our Lord 2018. The good Rev. Billy and the 35-voice Stop Shopping Choir are New York activists who "sing all the right songs in all the wrong places", from Monsanto's labs to a JP Morgan Chase lobby and (the then BP-sponsored) Tate Modern's turbine hall in the UK. In 2018, they have been arrested nine times (so far), lying down to stop the prison buses of the USA's notorious ICE (Immigration Customs Enforcement). CHANGE-A-LUJAH! Can you feel the LOVE?

**Greetings to all you GOOD TROUBLEMAKERS from THE CHURCH of STOP SHOPPING!** I just woke up, eyes opening in the dark, and what's the first thing I'm aware of? Of course! It's the end of the world! Oceans, nations... all GOING, GOING, GONE. I have two loved ones here, sleeping on. Eight-year-old Lena and her mother, Savitri. I get up and walk outside in the dark. Young people are coming home at 4am from a club. They don't seem aware they are

growing into adulthood just in time to get shit on by the previous 50 generations... a brutal colonisation that reaches through time. **CHANGE-A-LUJAH! We ALL want to escape from this! Make a new app, a vicious surrealism that, when incantationed, the sides of Mister Softee trucks will bubble into large lakes of happiness. We'll call these all Designated Contentment Areas – free of meth, hedge funds and Roseanne Barr.**

**No. Won't work. That won't work. That's Silicon Valley impulse. You can't monetise the apocalypse! There's no app for the End Times. There is just LIFE and celebrating LIFE in the dancing FLESH, the ultimate media. AMEN?**

**We are tacking against the wind of an apocalypse that's now picking up lava-burning steam. We KNOW what time it is! One by one, we are being murdered: Roxana Hernandez, Saheed Vassell, Claudia Gonzalez, Stephon Clark...**

**GOOD TROUBLE. We're PRAYING to the Earth, I'll say THAT. We're praying directly to LIFE itself, right into the DIRT, into the SKY, like it's as BIG as everything, and it's listening to US, and we're asking LIFE to help US, but we can't decipher the silence of extinction, the roar of superstorms, the anguish of millions walking toward a dream over the border. Sometimes, when the Earth speaks, it is so CLEAR, but sometimes all we can do is stop and live in the funky foreground...**

**This is what Earth-Life is telling us, that we ate ourselves off the planet and that happened a while ago. Now, the EARTH tells us to pray TO it, to hear voices like CRAZY people. Like when we have that moment of CLARITY in the very heart of a car accident, when common sense spits into the air like BLOOD.**

**The VOICE we hear is the LIFE around us. We've been killing it fast, but it will survive us. EARTH-A-LUJAH! Tell us what to do. She says to get a lot angrier, to be the force of REVOLUTION, but make it a living, LOVING anger.**

**GOOD TROUBLE, your pages are full of SCARY HOPE. You are off the edge of the cliff, making soup kitchens in the air. Climate change rallies in China! Music taken into the body or TWO bodies or ALL the bodies... Oh, yeah, I'm in CHURCH now!**

**EARTH-A-LUJAH! AMEN. – Rev. Billy**



Can you FEEL it? Rev. Billy of Church of Stop Shopping spreading the good word

QUOTE OF THE YEAR

“WE CALL BS.”

– Emma Gonzalez, a senior at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School who survived a mass shooting in February, to lawmakers and gun advocates.

“There is no sound more powerful than the marching feet of a determined people.”  
#goodtrouble – John Lewis, congressman, Georgia @repjohnlewis

SHMASHA HITS: THE SUDAN JAZZ SESSIONS

Known as the James Brown or Fela Kuti of Sudan, Kamal Keila's career kicked off in the 1960s. He never released a record, but he did record multiple sessions for Sudanese radio, and on a visit to his house, Jannis Sturtz of the Habibi Funk label discovered Keila had "gotten his hands on two sessions and had kept those two studio reels all these years" – and despite mould, they played well. "His lyrics, at least when he sings in English, which indicates more freedom from censorship, are very political," writes Sturtz. "A



From an interview with Kamal Keila on December 20, 2017, at his home on the outskirts of Khartoum: "When it comes to my style, my music is very political. Art must talk about

this. It is a message. It is not just for dancing and entertainment. There are lessons to give. Even the president of Sudan agreed with this. I travelled with him to the signing of the peace agreement in Nairobi. When the invitation came to the president, Omar al-Bashir, he asked: "Where is Kamal Keila? There is no other artist I can take". He called me at 5am in the morning to travel with him... They took me there and I sang a song, 'Shmasha', and "We need African Unity". When I sang, there was a

problem. A lot of people from the delegation said: "Sudan is an Arab country." I didn't believe in that. Here in Sudan, they don't want someone to dance. I was the first one to teach the people how to dance like this. This was a problem for a lot of people and a key reason why I always preferred to play outside of Sudan. These type of issues are why I wrote songs like "Muslims and Christians".

Interview and translation by Larissa Fuhrmann & Yassir Awad

**What's the power of a poster?** Even in today's internet and Instagram-friendly society, I still think posters have a place. If you look at Shepard Fairey's Hope poster, that helped elect a black man into the presidency of the United States. Posters still have a tremendous amount of power. You might not watch this TV show, or buy a newspaper, but we have to go outside, at which point you are confronted by all these posters. One of the reasons they work so well is that they are unbelievably simplistic. It's a one-colour screen print with one very simple graphic and one simple message. If you walk down the street and you see a complicated

**What is it about the Atelier Populaire that speaks to our time?** I love the fact that they wanted it to be completely anonymous. They didn't want anyone to know who the authors were, just the work. These posters would be voted on and then produced. It was a truly socialist movement! They were given paper by the newspaper union, which is why the prints were such a shocking quality – it's amazing any survived. From the workers to the students, everyone on the left were aligned, and they were just so prolific about putting stuff out there. There was just so many of them! The Paris riots were happening, so they were putting stuff out at great risk to themselves. It was very on-the-edge and close-to-the-bone stuff.



Some of these posters have found their way into the collections of institutions, museums and private galleries, and today they are part of our visual landscape – inspiration fodder for advertising executives and designers and activists. One gallerist, however, is keen to reboot their radicalism: in May 2018, Steve Lazarides, gallerist for globally renowned street artists such as JR, 3D, Invader and Banksy, put on a show of his private collection of Atelier Populaire posters alongside a screening workshop so visitors could make their own. Lazarides also invited Good Trouble along for the ride.

image on a wall you walk past it, but this is something that is so visceral, so immediate, so angry and so in your face, you're stopping people in their tracks.

**Can we talk about how they use images and words?** This is amazing, isn't it? "Vive la resistance of the proletariat." Or this image of a head being screwed, or the immigrants and French workers uniting, even as a factory owner tries to pull them apart. I just love the aesthetic. I love the meaning of it. I like the simplicity of it. People get overly complicated sometimes, but this is aimed at the working class. This wasn't aimed at the elite. If you suddenly used references that you need a degree to understand, it wouldn't have worked. Something that's so clever is that they're using one sentence and an image to get their message across, and it's happening every day. This speed is so important, as is the fact that you can't avoid it because it's on the street.

WORDS BY CHARLIE ROBIN JONES

VERSE CORNER

IMAGINING AMERICA

Imagining America  
The Wild West Frontier  
Imagining real protest on desert streets  
I chill in your Coming Insurrection  
I vent lost vapours  
I see rapid change  
Moving energies of your everyday  
My whole life  
A battle to understand the world  
And how easily continents move  
How darkness reigns  
And countries swing into violence  
I'm writing statutes  
Empty bolted horses  
Gentrified ghost cities  
The price of tents, and rents  
Are going up, all the time  
And I can only swallow systems  
And live with my vitamins  
I join the broken sounds of sound  
I pierce the weather  
And take the long view of total war and failure  
You see it now, it's over  
Don't be late, for freedom

Visual artists Samuel Leveck and Jennifer Lewandowski's work was featured in Good Trouble Issue 23's 'Art of Resistance' dossier. Their music *Das Hund* was formed in Berlin in 2011, and they have performed across the UK, and as far afield as the deserts of Joshua Tree, California. The songs and poetry on their debut album *For Freedom* are a response to growing political turmoil and "the changing landscape of contemporary London, the EU referendum and US presidential election campaigns".



We asked good troublemakers AMPLIFIER FOUNDATION to share a few things they've learned over the last year about using art as a tool of activism

AMPLIFIER FOUNDATION is a design lab dedicated to working with artists and activists to create social change through the creation and proliferation of political imagery. They work with artists to create posters and imagery in the form of hi-res art that is free to download from their website. They collaborated with the Women's March on Washington last year – the *We the People* project with artists Shepard Fairey (Obey), Jessica Sabogal and Ernesto Yerena – and are now touring the US, distributing posters in major cities ahead of the 2018 midterm elections, after doing an open call for female-identifying and nonconforming artists to submit work for the posters. The programme is called *Power to the Polls*. Here's what they told us:

1) "Art has power. In times of uncertainty, art is more than beauty. It is both a weapon and a shield in the battle for our identity, our dignity, and our safety. Art has the power to wake people up in ways other mediums cannot, and can serve as a catalyst for meaningful change. But most of all, for Amplifier, it is a compass in turbulent times, pointing the way to the future we want to live in."

2) "Art and activism is a lifestyle. It requires the ability to be comfortable being uncomfortable, to maintain a constant hustle, and an intimate and vulnerable dedication to the work."

3) "Our work is intersectional! It's our responsibility to be aware of and understand the intersections of the social ecosystems we live within and learn how we can support each others work to create the most meaningful change."

4) "Activist art should be free! By providing artwork for free at actions, events, and through free high-resolution digital downloads to the public, we make art accessible to people who may normally not be able to afford it, in forms as small as stickers or posters, to building sized print files for businesses. By removing financial constraints, we exponentially increase the spread of these important messages."

5) "Analogue art matters! Analogue art gives us symbols to gather around, and grows our community. If we make it physical, if we literally hold this art and carry it in front of us, if we hang it on our walls or in our windows every day for our family and neighbours and colleagues to see, then we remind ourselves of what we are building, and we find strength when we become tired."

Intro by Callie Hitchcock. Get involved at [amplifier.org](#)

BEAUTY IS STILL IN THE STREETS

50 years on from the French uprisings of May 1968, gallerist STEVE LAZARIDES displays his personal collection of posters by the Atelier Populaire and explains what gives these political prints their power

May 2018 marked 50 years since *mai soixante-huit*, the wave of uprisings, demonstrations and revolutions that rocked Paris in 1968, when thousands of youths and millions of workers took to the streets to shut down the (take your pick) petty right-wing authoritarian government of Charles de Gaulle, consumerist culture, US imperialism, capitalism, racism and traditional sexual morality.

The protests had varying degrees of success, but in the five decades since, those turbulent months have etched themselves into our popular vision of protest: students in corduroy jackets and bandanas clambering over barricades; all-night lectures attended by steel workers and filmmakers; city walls that yelled "It is Forbidden to Forbid!"; "Beauty Is in the Streets" and "Be Realistic: Demand the Impossible"; sexy people running in black and white; stark graphics depicting riot police as SS officers, plastered up on the streets every night.

Often, the searing boldness of these posters transcends their time – their language and their thin paper, produced by striking members of the newspaper's union on the cheap pulp that usually carried tabloids. The next day's posters were decided each evening by members of the Atelier Populaire, a group of anonymous designers, printers and sloganers. These political posters, radical in intent, hastily produced and communally created, would then be pasted around town under the cover of darkness, to be seen by millions of passersby before being torn down, covered up or washed away by the rain. Or, sometimes, quietly kept by Parisians who spotted their beauty and wanted a little piece of history in the making.



DON'T LET MY PAST BE YOUR FUTURE

A veteran of the Second World War and the Great Depression, 95-year-old activist and author HARRY LESLIE SMITH is now preparing for his 'last stand', a tour of the world's refugee camps

As a child growing up in the slums of Yorkshire, Harry Leslie Smith was so poor that that his family dinner was often a bowl of broken cereal salvaged from the nearby Weetabix factory, eaten with water. There was not yet a National Health Service or any kind of social safety net, and with his father out of work, they were at the mercy of others.

Now 95, Harry is a survivor of the Great Depression, a veteran of the Second World War (Royal Air Force) and a lifelong socialist who contends that the world is now facing its "most dangerous juncture since the 1930s".

At an age where most might be putting their feet up for a well-earned rest, he is busy owning racists and idiots on his ever-lively Twitter account, contributing articles and videos to the *New Statesman*, the *Daily Mirror* and the *Guardian*, and funding his speaking tours from his old-age pension and the royalty fees from his five books. When I called him in Toronto, where he lives for half the year, he was making final preparations for what he describes as his "last great challenge" – a crowd-funded tour of the world's refugee hotspots, aiming to "document this preventable tragedy that may lead us to another war as gruesome as the one I helped fight against Hitler over 70 years ago".

Harry, thanks for speaking to us. I'm thrilled we can feature you...

I'm thrilled I'm still alive! It's been a tough year. I understand you had pneumonia earlier this year. I'm glad you've returned to health. How are you doing?

You can't keep an old bugger down, you know? We were treated for bronchitis just one month after the NHS was founded in 1948. How does it feel to be saved again by the same service so many years later?

It was a miracle. Because nobody had ever given us anything, since I was born – no one in my class was entitled to a doctor or dentist or hospital. In that age, you just had to settle for anything you could find in nature. People can't believe it today, and unfortunately they're closing their eyes to the ruinations in our present-day hospital service.

You're in Canada at the moment. Where are you, and what are you doing?

I live half a year here, half in England. And soon, in what shall be my piece de résistance, I'm going to visit all of the refugee camps around the world. I'm starting off in Québec, and then from there I will go to the States, then I'll be off to Greece and up through the Balkans. After I've done the EU, I'll be writing another book – what I feel could put some sort of resolution to all this business of infighting, about who's going to supply this or that.

Why is it important to you to go on this huge trip to these refugee camps?

It's important because we have to find out what all these other countries are going to do to at least place many of these people... and to regain the spirit of 1945. I watched the refugees flooding from the north to the south when I was in the Air Force. In Holland and Germany too, and it was a pitiful sight, believe me. But England never turned her back on refugees. She built places for them to stay, she made sure the kids went to school, and if anyone in England protested about it, they would just tell them to shut their gobs because you hadn't seen anything yet. There's going to be a hell of a lot more.

You're in your mid-90s now. What gives you the motivation to keep on doing these things at an age when you would be easily forgiven for deciding to put your feet up?

Remember, I started late because I didn't get

angry enough, early enough. It wasn't until the 2008 banking crash, when people were robbed and no one got blamed for all that crime. They bailed out the banks but they didn't do anything for the people who were robbed, because that is when they introduced austerity to the rest of the people, and it's been in ever since. It was the people who paid for the banks, not sacking them and sending the people who ran the banks to jail.

So, that was the moment you decided to become an activist?

I was 85 then! And when I read about it, I got so bloody mad. I was lying on the beach, relaxing in my retirement, in Portugal... and then I just went to work and did what I could – starting to write, and luckily found a publisher for my most famous book, *Harry's Last Stand*, which has been a tremendous seller, and still is.

I guess you're going to be on your refugee tour when Trump visits the UK this summer. But if you were in the UK, would you join the protests?

I most certainly would, but I don't think he'll find that he'll get too big a reception. I know, when a country changes government, there's always turmoil. But when you get someone put into a position like Trump, it shocks most people. So far in his reign, all he's been doing is hiring and firing until... He's creating a game. He's creating chaos.

Well, hiring and firing was the reality TV show he came from.

Yes. I hate to say it, because I love the US. I've spent many happy times there, but we were all flooded when he started trying to say, "These people can't come in, and those people can't come in..." It makes you think the whole world has gone crazy.

Let's talk about Britain for a little bit. After the results of the Brexit referendum, there's a lot of nationalism, xenophobia, racism. I wanted to ask – in your experience, do you think this has always been part of who we are as a country, or is it something truly new and dangerous?

It's new and dangerous, for sure. It's a certain gang of people in England who want to change society... I sometimes despair for it.

It's been one year since the Grenfell tower fire in west London. How much has the housing situation changed since you grew up poor?

After the war, we made sure we were going to have a government by the people and for the people, and we succeeded for a while. And before we got into our power, there were individual men who had fought in the First World War providing shelters for returning soldiers. I was a late leaver from the Air Force – I didn't get out until 1948, because I married a German girl over there. I was so happy and hoping I could stay in Hamburg, actually. Because it was a hell of a sight better to live there than in England.

You survived the war, you lived through the Great Depression... What words of advice would you have for a younger generation at this time, from someone who has been through several major crises in his lifetime?

Well, General Sherman once said: "War is hell. Stay out of it."

Right. And believe me, it's no cup of tea. You're dead, you're dead and that's your life, so don't get involved! No matter what governments tell you, war does not solve anything. It's debate and discussion, and I'm not sure you would get it from Trump. Maybe he would pass a law which forces you to go. But I think if everyone stood up and said, "We're not going to go to war, because war involves another country,



and that country involves another country, and so on..." It spreads around the world... This time, it would be armageddon, in my opinion.

Like during the Vietnam war, when people refused to go and burned their draft cards in the streets?

That's right! That's right. People don't realise what power they have, if they put their backs into it and have an opinion of what's right and what's wrong.

How does the scale of what we're facing now compare? Is it as serious as other moments you've lived through?

What myself and all the other soldiers, including the Americans and everyone else who fought in the war I fought in... They would think that was a picnic to what we would get if a war erupted in this day and age. There are too many ghastly weapons at hand which will eliminate the world, in my opinion. And we will wind up where we started – living in caves or some derelict place in the islands, hunting for food like our ancestors.

You've got almost 200,000 followers on Twitter. What have you learned from using it?

Social media is how I can connect with more people. It's very handy, it's a good way to get a large number of people listening, especially young people. Unfortunately, many have never had enough money to go to university, never had enough money to feel free. And they're stuck in a rut where they can't happily afford to have a beer at a pub. That is real life for them, and they will easily rebel.

And rebellion, while I'm on it, is a damn good thing! They have to get together in a group and they have to march on the Houses of Parliament and the White House, whatever party is running them, and let them know they're not going to put up with the bullshit the governments are handing out. Because it's all a bloody lie, and they can change it if they will, by making sure all the people in the upper echelon of our countries, who don't pay enough taxes, make sure they are declaring what they made!

On that note of rebellion, Good Trouble takes its name from a quote by the American congressman and civil-rights hero John Lewis, who says, "When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have a moral obligation to go out and get into trouble. Good trouble." What do you think about that?

I think it is a fantastic quote. It's excellent, and like I said before, people have got to start pulling some

muscle behind their protests. They have to start showing governments they're not going to sit quietly and do nothing. I am disgusted when I go to England and look down city streets and see hundreds of their citizens lying on the side of the street with their hands out, where they slept. How can a government feel it's doing its job?

Indeed. Thanks, Harry. I don't want to keep you too long, so one last question. Ultimately, what gives you reasons to be hopeful for the future?

I've always been optimistic, actually. And I've always been a worker. I've never had a job where I could sit down and say, that's it. I'm finished now. I work all day long. I sold carpets in a carpet store in Toronto. I just felt that, somehow or other, we should always be doing something that would put us into a category, even if dead, where people would look back and say, now, there was a man.

WORDS BY RODERICK STANLEY / PHOTOGRAPH OF HARRY AT HOME BY ALANA DERKSEN FOR GOOD TROUBLE (INSET: HARRY AT 'THE JUNGLE' CAMP IN CALAIS, FRANCE)

Don't Let My Past Be Your Future is published by Little Brown



Harry at refugee camp



# STILL BLAZING

"Who even are the Guerrilla Girls though?" a groomed Gen Z'er whispers to her mate in the row in front of me, in a half-empty lecture hall at the Fashion Institute of Technology on May 2 at 6pm. I feel my teeth clench with upset as I answer to myself: "Only an anonymous group of feminist, female artists devoted to fighting sexism and racism within the art world since 1985!" But then I realise, she doesn't know, and that's ok because ten years ago in college, I didn't know, and my mind was blown too, and so the baton of enlightenment will be passed. And actually, their impact, their truth, and potency lies in the fact that they're not big on Instagram, no one is ever really in on their joke, no one considers the leader of the group to be a gfoals because – guess what – there is no face, and they are virtually unknown even today, despite their huge contribution.



describe the policies they put in place as a group around who and where they are comfortable showing with. They laugh, "What better way to mock the art institution than on its own walls, in front of its face?" Of course, no one is getting famous or rich in the Guerrilla Girls! Despite their iconic status, they have zero fame. They are faceless, unknown, creditless. Since their founding in 1985, they always set to raise awareness through facts, humour and the power of the image. Their work projects sarcasm on museum walls without permission. Linda Nochlin explained that we as a society tend to accept whatever is, as natural, and we don't probe for the reasons something is or isn't. We just let it be. Whether we realise it or not, we have come to accept what has been coded before us. We might know something isn't right, but when you see it every single day for your whole life, it's hard to put your finger on what that is. But the Guerrilla Girls, as Gloria Steinem put it, "insist on a world as if women mattered;" and do this by making us "both laugh and fight!" Because, to these two anonymous women presenting their work 30 years on, it's about the potency of their message. And the fact that, despite it being a half-empty room, they entered from the back in total darkness, wearing gorilla masks and handing out bananas.

WORDS BY LYDIA PANG / IMAGES © GUERRILLA GIRLS, COURTESY GUERRILLAGIRLS.COM, PHOTO ON STREET: GEORGE LANGE (1991)

"The 55-strong Guerrilla Girls group that exists today is a symptom of the inequality that prevails, that there is still work to be done."

## TOP TEN SIGNS THAT YOU'RE AN ART WORLD TOKEN:

1. You're the only woman in the room.
2. You're the only woman in the room.
3. You're the only woman in the room.
4. You're the only woman in the room.
5. You're the only woman in the room.
6. You're the only woman in the room.
7. You're the only woman in the room.
8. You're the only woman in the room.
9. You're the only woman in the room.
10. You're the only woman in the room.



IF YOU KEEP WOMEN AWAY THEY GET BIGGER

## THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING A WOMAN ARTIST:

Working without the pressure of success  
Not having to be in shows with men  
Having an escape from the art world in your 4 free-lance jobs  
Knowing your career might pick up after you're eighty  
Being reassured that whatever kind of art you make it will be labeled feminist  
Not being stuck in a tedious teaching position  
Seeing your ideas live on in the work of others  
Having more time to work when your mate dumps you for someone younger  
Being included in revised versions of art history  
Not having to endure the embarrassment of being called a genius  
Getting your picture in the art magazines wearing a gorilla suit

A PLEASANT REMINDER FROM THE GUERRILLA GIRLS CONCERNING THE ART WORLD

## HOW TO TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR PHONE

1. Turn off all notifications that don't come from people. Yes, all of them.
2. Limit your apps on the home screen to essential tools such as calendars or maps.
3. Charge your phone outside of the bedroom to avoid temptation to check it at night or first thing in the morning.
4. Remove social media apps and only access them through your browser (and log out to make it harder to check them through force of habit).
5. Download apps that help reduce screen time. Check out humanetech.com/take-control.
6. Just throw the bloody thing in the sea.

## @BADASSDUJOUR TEN RECENT BADASSES DU JOUR

1. The person who blocked the door of the MP who blocked the upskirting bill with her knickers.
2. The five grandpans who locked on inside the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in London in an anti-tracking protest.
3. The 600 women arrested at immigration protests in the US Senate building chanting "Abolish ICE".
4. The art-activists with @FFcultureNL who staged a gorgeous, ginormous banner drop inside the @vangoghmuseum in Amsterdam over the issue of dirty oil sponsorship money from Shell.
5. The Israeli LGBTQI activists who stopped the start of Tel Aviv Pride to protest against the occupation and the "pink-washing" of the government's human rights record.
6. The man who stole the clothes of Alexander Gauland, co-leader of the German far-right AfD party, while he was bathing a lake near #Potsdam, shouting "For Nazis there is no bathing place".

The young Austrian climate activist from @SystemChangeAT seizing the stage from the Austrian president.  
Lebanese actor Manal Issa holding a "Stop the Attack on Gaza" sign at the premiere of *Solo: A Star Wars Story* at Cannes.  
Zimbabwe's female armed anti-poaching squad – "Hunt my animals and I'll catch you".  
The Georgian ravers and young Tbilisians who poured on to the streets of the capital to protest the shutdown of clubs. Their mantra: "We dance together; we fight together."

## THINGS MY DAD LEARNED IN THE NORWEGIAN RESISTANCE

- You never win a head-on battle... Create friction, increase transaction costs.
- Resistance can be a small act, like losing a piece of paper.
- Use your privilege and access if you have it.
- Sometimes the best way is to do things right in the open.
- Be ready for opportunity when it strikes.
- Operate in cells to limit damage.
- Be careful who you trust.
- Use the skills you have to contribute. (By @TorEkelandPC)

## WHY I WENT ON HUNGER STRIKE FOR 14 DAYS

By Clare Farrell  
of Vote No Heathrow

My generation have inherited an irreversible disaster. The accepted science indicates that rising temperatures are accelerating and the climate breakdown will be both abrupt and catastrophic. Scientific predictions point to the Arctic sea ice melting entirely in summer by around 2022 – just four years time. The sixth mass extinction event is under way – this is a pivotal point for human life on Earth. We have exhausted all calm, moderate routes for change; we have to try new tactics, different methods, and we have a duty to try to make it count, because our time is almost up.

With this at the forefront of my mind, I starved myself for 14 days with others at the Vote No Heathrow campaign, calling on the supposedly progressive Labour and Scottish National parties to whip their votes in opposition to expansion of Heathrow airport. We feel this action is an attempt at an appropriate moral response and a credible level of self-sacrifice to get those leading us all to an annihilation to listen. Moreover, this withdrawal from all food is a privilege in 2018. In as little as 10 to 15 years, it will be a privilege for many millions not to starve as rising temperatures ruin crops and undermine the global food system.

On June 25, British parliament voted 415 to 119 in favour of building a third runway at London's Heathrow airport. The development was supported by 119 Labour MPs, while 96 voted against the move. More Labour MPs supported the government than backed their leader Jeremy Corbyn, who opposed the expansion. ★

## FOUR QUESTIONS: RAFAEL ESPINAL

New York City councilman Rafael Espinal (Bed-Stuy, Brownsville, Bushwick, Crown Heights, Cypress Hills and East New York) had a busy 2017. Along with local groups, he led the charge in overturning the city's notoriously racist Cabaret Law. Now he's focusing on the environment. We dropped into his office to ask him a few questions.

**What is your focus this year?**  
I think the big conversation now is around climate change. And now more than ever, it's important for local government to be aggressive as it can be to help implement policies that's going to fight back against what's happening in Washington. It's unfortunate that we had to wait this long to make that realisation – because in reality, it does start in local law, it starts with the everyday person living in New York City. But the silver lining is that what's happening in Washington is allowing people to really see they can have an impact on local government.  
**Did you grow up in the neighbourhoods you represent?**  
I grew up in East New York and Cypress Hills. I was born and raised there. Cypress Hills is north of that area, East New York is technically south. At the time I was growing up, it was one of the – and probably still is – one of the most disinvested communities in the city. Very high crime, lack of resources for students, crumbling infrastructure.

**What is the best way for people to run for office themselves?**  
I didn't think I was gonna run for office. The thought of me running for office, that didn't come to me till I was like, 24 years old, and I ran when I was 26... So I encourage anyone and everyone who wants to run for office to not be afraid to do it. The path is there for anyone who has the determination. The best way I think to start is: get to know your local elected officials who are there now. Build that relationship, learn how it works, learn how campaigns work, volunteer, get yourself known, go to the community board meetings, become a figure in the neighborhood. And from there, you're able to go through the process and put your name on the ballot.  
**How do you remain motivated and optimistic?**  
I'm very optimistic. I'm an idealist at heart. But I know government has a lot of bureaucracy. I stay away from reading negative tweets or news. I know it exists, but I know what the issues are, but I don't need to hear 20 people complain about the same thing. That drags you down. Let's focus on those issues that we actually have control over, instead of everything else that's going on – because we can't, at the current moment, just walk into the White House and tell Trump what to do. So let's complain less and let's find ways to move forward. ★

## THE BREXIT TV TIMES

The year is 2019. Britain has left the European Union. All television channels have been unified into one ultra-patriotic broadcasting network to keep up that old Dunkirk spirit. (Schedule repeats daily)

**7am News**  
A series of incoherent news-readers attempt to convey the true horror of what has happened to this once forward-looking nation while attempting to choke back tears.

**8am Full English Brexit**  
There's egg on our face and the economy's toast! But we're keeping our spirits high with this lighthearted game show, as we invite a series of public figures to attempt to explain the tangible benefits of leaving the EU while members of the public pick them with shit and rotten fruit. (Dir. Werner Herzog)

**9am National Anthem**  
Slowed down by 800% and on a loop. (Aval. 5.1 Surround Sound)

**12pm Lunch Scream**  
National group-therapy session, with viewers invited to scream at their television sets for an hour.

**1pm News**  
Two hours of relentlessly grim updates from the few surviving newscasters.

**3pm GOALS**  
Just goals and loads of goals.

**6pm Question Time**  
Long-running host David Dimbleby has been reactivated by a special act of parliament and forced at gunpoint to host this new two-hour version of the national discussion show, in which a series of pork-faced men bellow wildly bigoted and uninformed nonsense at a panel of formerly fringe far-right political figures who nod while attempting to hide their surprise at everyone suddenly taking what they have to say seriously.

**8pm Deportation Squad Live**  
Family entertainment. Follow our team on the ground as they visit a series of benighted urban areas, kick someone's fucking doors in, break their nose and drag them away in handcuffs while the terrified family screams in impotent horror.

**9pm Oh Lordy, What a Calamity!**  
Hilarious live-improv comedy skit show, with Jim Davidson and Roy Chubby Brown. (Hosted by Katie Hopkins)

**11pm Cheer Up! It Ain't That Bad**  
That bit from *Only Fools & Horses* where Del Boy falls through the gap in the bar as a looping GIF, set to the sound of hysterical screaming laughter.

**12pm Snooker**  
From somewhere or other.

**2am Dad's Army**  
Re-runs until 7am.

# GETTING A RISE

From Drunken Bakers to The Male Online, BARNEY FARMER writes brutally honest, hilarious and heartbreaking comic strips that cut to the core of modern British life, as seen in the pages of Viz and across the cultural battlefield of social media. Seth Jacobson meets him for a pint

The sun is shining and Good Trouble is ensconced in a London pub beer garden with Barney Farmer, a writer of rare talent whose work such as Drunken Bakers and The Male Online, published in the UK's long-running, notorious Viz adult comic, reveal him as an astute observer of the rot on the vine currently so rampant in society.

As the hours flow by over a pie and a pint (OK, more than one), Farmer explains how the motivation to create his world-weary characters, who have had the stuffing knocked out of them by the vicissitudes of modern life, can come from the most mundane of places. "The story of Britain can be told many ways, but it can be (best) told on its high street," he says. "It's now a greasy takeaway every few hundred yards, and We Buy Gold shops, We Buy Clothes... It's the high street telling you what's actually going on in Britain – it's a space to be inhabited, for a time, as long as it's profitable to do so, then move on."

He cites one of Britain's greatest writers and chroniclers of social change as an unlikely influence on his work: "Charles Dickens, writing at a time when the written word was pretty much the summit of home entertainment, had phenomenal power. And it's fairly obvious his influence in the late 19th, and into the 20th, century was the equal of any politician of that day." In his comics, usually illustrated by his trusted partner Lee Healey, Farmer is a scabrous and articulate voice for the left behind – those people who are subsisting on benefits but are still quizzed on a daily basis by an unrelentingly hostile state, or struggling in dying industries such as baking, still trying to pretend, somehow, that everything is alright.

These are dangerous times. Reactionary voices gain such play across social media that you need to be running before you've put your boots on to counter their accusations that it's all the fault of the immigrants, the foreigners, the "other". In the UK, we have been experiencing nascent culture wars over the last few years, and since before the 2016 Brexit vote to leave the EU. Mercifully, many figures have emerged in the British social media space who have led the fight against the new wave of hard-right hostiles. And foremost among those is Farmer, from Lancashire in the north of England, whose blend of caustic wit, compassion and empathy has marked him out as one of our champions in the ongoing fight to retain our common humanity.

"They don't like it up 'em," he says of Leavers (people who voted for the UK to leave the EU), but the comment could easily apply to any of the reactionary groups at work today. "They talk about free speech, but they're tremendously pi-



That's the lethal combination – giving but not taking, it's the mentality of the bully." Through The Male Online, self-published on Farmer's Twitter feed, Farmer lampoons the Little Englander keyboard warriors who embody the spirit of the country's middle-market tabloid the Daily Mail, pushing for the hardest of Brexits and railing against every aspect of multicultural modern Britain.

Farmer's loathsome cartoon character, a cultural product of our times, is also obsessed with the salaciousness of the Daily Mail

website's infamous "sidebar of shame", with its leering pictures of young women "old beyond their years", to the extent that his internet time is spent with his trousers halfway down his thighs ("It's my hernia, Beryl!" he explains to his long-suffering wife); Farmer's caricature neatly skewers the abject hypocrisy of this depressingly large group of people.

In his other work, Farmer focuses on the appalling indignities that those on the lowest rung of society's ladder are forced to endure to maintain the basic levels of survival – his targets are the pawn shops and bookmakers that prey on the poor, and the benefits agencies that enforce degrading interrogations to determine people's level of poverty. If you had doubts about how low this could go, Farmer cites the case of a woman applying for sickness benefit for her depression, who was asked by the government agency examining her claim: "Can you tell me why you haven't killed yourself yet?"

It's with the Drunken Bakers strip, which first appeared in 2002, that Farmer and Healey present the truest glimpse of what Britain looks like. It's become lazy shorthand to say it is reminiscent of the work of Samuel Beckett, but it's a fair description. In every iteration of the story, we follow two (unnamed) middle-aged bakers who (drunkenly) go about their day's business, not managing to bake any cakes and embarking on journeys down rabbit holes into a past where the future was still wide open and their destinies were under their own control. Nothing ever changes – the bakers stay drunk, the cakes remain unbaked.

It's bleak stuff, but it articulates the current hopelessness of the lower echelon of British society – the people who once serviced the manufacturing base that made Britain the heart of the industrial revolution.

"I was born and raised in a little industrial town," says Farmer. "All the industry was gone. Lancashire had a very particular experience – a lot of the things that happened in the rest of Britain in the 1970s and 80s had already happened in Lancashire. A lot of it had gone by the time I came along, because the cotton industry, which was basically sustained by keeping a boot on the neck on India, it was gone."

Growing up in a region defined by a dying industry, Farmer left school at 15 and worked "in dead-end jobs" for a while. "Boredom is a great fire up your arse. If you get bored enough, there's just a chance you might do something to entertain yourself."

For Farmer, that eventually led to creating comics. The renaissance of that industry in the 1980s led by Viz saw him secure work at a slew of copycat titles, along with the way meeting his long-term collaborator, artist Healey.

"I was a cartoonist, but I was terrible," says Farmer. "Editors would find me cartoonists to work with but I'd never quite click with them. As soon as I started working with Lee and saw how he drew, it suddenly became a lot easier to write. We had a stack of work we had done for other

places, and we sent a telephone directory of strips to Viz – I'd never sent anything before, as I always assumed they had everything covered. They plucked Bakers out of that big wad and said, 'We'll have this one.' That was the first one." Since 2002, Drunken Bakers has been a stalwart of Viz: it has chronicled the demise of traditional services and society as authentically as any economic study of the state of the nation. For Farmer, bakeries were a barometer of British society: "There would be a town full of terraced houses, and at the end of every street there would be a baker. So a town of 50,000 people, it probably had a bakery for every hundred people."

"Family-run bakers in Preston have been there for generations. All you need is one poor town, and it gets two Greggs (a national chain), and then that's four or five bakeries nailed... Supermarket bread on top of that. They've come under attack from multiple angles. It was one of the things that dawned on me, that bread was a metaphor."

"We do have a culture war. We have wars across every debate, and it's more or less the same sides. People are at war over absolutely everything. Up until a few years ago, I was quite an angry participant and would often get involved in slanging matches. Time has mellowed me slightly. I try to engage people, who don't necessarily share my politics. In a polite way."

Farmer's acceptance spreads to his behaviour on social media: "I'm followed by quite a lot of people whose politics I find reprehensible. I think it's good to follow a representative sample of people you don't agree with. I wouldn't want to exclude them altogether, not least because about 25% of The Male Online strips I've done have derived from reactions I've had. Twitter's a great resource, a good place to learn how what's going on in the world is affecting a certain selection of people."

It's good being a satirist, right? Taking the piss out of everyone? "I didn't set out as a satirist," he says. "I wanted to write about things that were real, not necessarily political things."

It was more the things that Viz writes about – it was archetypes, things you see in the real world, shops, and the man you see in the park. That's what I set out writing about, then everything changed about me. The knock-about press has failed, it's become part of the absurdity – it's become a driver of the absurdity. The fourth estate has a very serious responsibility."

In many ways, life caught up with Farmer, rather than him seeking to make waves: "Brexit is a disaster."

I laughed when Trump got in because it's obviously so absurd. I didn't laugh the morning after the Brexit referendum. It was equally absurd, but I'm right in the middle of it! "The thing with Brexit is we see ourselves returning to the glory days of Empire, he says: "We've gone past the imperial hanger, we've woken up, and we're drinking again. We're pissed again!" ★

DRUNKEN BAKER BY BARNEY FARMER IS PUBLISHED BY WRECKING BALL PRESS/ PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN LEDGER-LOMAS





From his concealed images of protest to his sculpture at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama, HANK WILLIS THOMAS is one of America's most important contemporary artists, delving into identity, race and consumer culture. He tells Francesca Gavin why he's happy engaging with both the political and the personal

The camera flash was invented to illuminate darkness. Flash grew out of experiments in the late 19th century involving explosive wires of magnesium, and from the 1920s onwards, flash bulbs became very popular with the press and police documenting events at night. That connection between illumination and exposure, news and documentation, speed and explosion, feeds into the work of American artist Hank Willis Thomas, whose work investigates representation and consumption of imagery, while unravelling our relationship to identity, race, protest, politics, advertising, commodification and the creation of history itself.

Willis Thomas's most recent exhibition at New York's Jack Shainman gallery is darkly lit. On the walls are works that appear like normal wall pieces, but the images are invisible or muted. The artist invites viewers to point their camera light or take a flash photograph of the works on retro-reflective material – and then the images break into clarity. Here, the revealed images are all of protests, largely from the 1960s. It is both a literal and metaphorical take on illumination. "You are holding a light source from your specific point of view," Willis Thomas says. "It illuminates wherever you look, and for me, that was an interesting device to use when I'm considering the notion of looking backwards, looking at history to find a way forwards that might be more productive than repeating patterns."

Here, the entire focus is on protest in the 20th century, and the depicted activism is varied. Black Panthers, civil rights, anti-Vietnam protest – it is unclear of the exactness of each image. "There is a broader connection to the different movements," Willis Thomas says. "Viewers might be able to make connections between these historical moments and movements that they might not otherwise make."

Willis Thomas's aesthetic echoes the graphic approaches of some of the big names of mid-century artists, people like Robert Rauschenberg, Andy Warhol and Franz Kline: "I started to think about ways I could make deeper, richer connections to art history."

The aim was to implicate the artists in their historical moment into the greater conversation.

"The work is definitely a (look at) the aesthetic of major protests," he says, "but (it is) also a lesson in pop art and abstract expressionism."

His choice of artists to reference could be seen as classical male, white establishment choices, but as the artist points out: "So is history."

Willis Thomas has exhibited widely, from the Studio Museum Harlem, to the Musée du quai Branly in Paris, Guggenheim Bilbao, to the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, Cape Town. Across his practice, which varies from sculptures of hands holding basketballs to mixed-media patchwork paintings, he is pulling apart how we consume imagery. As he puts it, "The process of looking is a political act. Seeing things that are not visible." Sometimes, that means manipulating or reworking images in some way – creating new images out of the past. This is a methodology with a purpose.

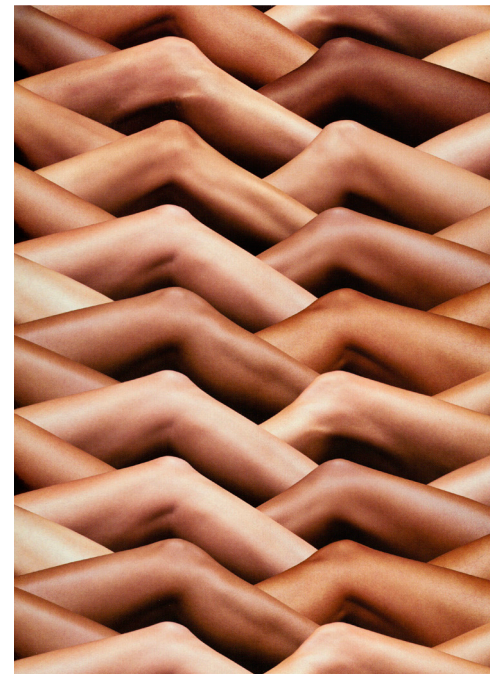
"I believe there are more pictures taken in a single second than any of us can really make sense of in our entire lives," he says. "We are so over-inundated with images that we can't see them, in a way."

"I realised there's maybe an opportunity and possibility for visual thinkers to help find ways to make and present images that we are vaguely familiar with – or are unfamiliar with – and find ways to present those in a new way that allows myself and viewers to really reconsider the past as well as the present. We're so often told these grand narratives of who we are and how we came to be. What we choose to believe really dictates our notions of our society, and how we get along, who we don't get along with, and how we resolve differences."

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Visual culture was an obvious choice of field for Willis Thomas, who came from a creative and intellectual background. His mother is a curator at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and also chair of the department of photography and imaging at the Tisch School of Arts in New York. He was surrounded by visual historical research throughout his life.

"Because of who my mother was, I just saw a different side of history, even though I might have been taught certain things at school," he says. "I was always hyper-aware that there were other lenses that weren't being focused on. I think as I grew older, I realised that there was a power of telling. That history is really a variation on storytelling. It's not as much about what happened but what we can get people to believe happened, and what the effects of that is."

One of Willis Thomas's most famous projects removes the text and straplines from advertisements that included African diasporic models and subjects, in a project entitled *Unbranded: Reflections in Black by Corporate America*. The result is an archive of representation that at first just feels like professional images. The entirely commercial context of the originals takes time to register. As he puts it, "Advertising is so seductively blind." He used the same approach to images of desire, beauty and the so-called ideal in a second series called *Unbranded: A Century of White Women 1915-2015*. The results force us to become aware of how our conception of norms is formed by capitalism.

Willis Thomas's work is not just based around the cliché of the single artist genius. He has worked on a number of often collaborative projects that veer into activism. For him, working in a collective way, and with different mindsets, is a way of creating change.

"I always feel that it's important to be visionary rather than reactionary," he says. "That's really one of the amazing powers of art – that it can resonate and challenge us to reconsider what we value, what we think we know."

Willis Thomas's art-activist projects have included *For Freedoms*, a platform for direct action and civic engagement using art that he established with Eric Gottesman; Cause Collective, a group of artists creating work in public space that search to engage and shape society; and *Into Action!*, an exhibition and festival he co-curated to respond to current politics. "I feel very comfortable challenging or engaging and relating to the public space," he says.

Willis Thomas was one of the artists to contribute to the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama, launched by the Equal Justice Initiative as a place for reflection on and memorial to the history of lynching and oppression. His sculpture, entitled 'Raise Up', depicts black figures made of bronze embedded in concrete, their hands raised above them, their faces entombed in concrete, or reaching to be lifted above. For him, it was "about salvation, about resurrection, thinking about fascism, baptism and protest."

Not all of his works are narrative or figurative. Abstraction, text, and language also emerge with works based around phrases such as "All things being equal" and "Love over rules." The last phrase was taken from the last audio footage Willis Thomas had of his cousin Songha Willis, who was murdered during a violent robbery in 2000.

"I think the personal is political, which is why so many people are drawn to artists," he says. "Art is often dealing with your own fears, and we're all human beings. Often, we're able to connect or explore vicariously through someone else's own exploration."

"I think that's one of the great benefits of having the responsibility of being an artist. We're all simultaneously teaching one another and learning from one another." ●

1) The Johnson Family (1985/2006) 2) Your Skin Has the Power to Protect You (2008) 3) Truth Booth (2016) 4) Liberation of T.O. (2003) 5) For Freedoms (installation view) (2016) 6) Now Do I Regret A Period When I Didn't by Glenn Kassin, from For Freedoms (2016) 7) Scared Chest (2003) 8) Smoking Joe Airt's Mama (1978/2006) 9) For Freedoms (installation view) (2016) © Hank Willis Thomas. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York. PORTRAIT OF HANK IN HIS STUDIO IN BROOKLYN BY CHRIS SHONTING FOR GOOD TROUBLE.





# MAKE THE ROAD NY



Make the Road New York builds the power of immigrant and working-class communities to achieve dignity and justice.

Tell us a bit about yourselves and your work...

**Darian Agostini:** I'm 23. Spent most of my life in Flatbush, being around this really black, immigrant, Caribbean culture. My own family had police officers come to my house when I was a kid, and do some really messed up stuff with my dad. I experienced hyper-aggressive policing since I was 13. I think in my senior year, that all crystallised with Trayvon Martin. Trayvon was killed through similar practice. I looked at Trayvon and just thought, *This is my life. What separates me from Trayvon?* I got a summer job at Make the Road NY. And I listened to people talk about the same things I was talking about. Like, why do we see all these police in our schools and neighbourhoods? Why don't we have that same funding for education? Why are folks in our communities going through poverty and homelessness and drug addiction? And how do we solve some of these problems? So I joined the part of the organisation focusing on policing work. To this day, we do a lot of work that connects with the families of people who have been killed by police. The list, sadly, continues to grow.

**Reign Rolon:** I'm 19. Born and raised in East New York, which at one point was the crime capital of Brooklyn. It's still kind of considered that. I'm black, but I'm Puerto Rican. I went to high school in Flatbush. And I feel like my high school years, it was like this realisation of, *Oh shit, I'm black.* I felt this in between-ness. My senior year of high school, I was in mad debates! My teacher really liked the fact I was doing that stuff. This internship programme came. I was not interested. She would show me the application and be like, it'd be cool if you signed up. Then she just kept appearing, lunchroom, drama class, everywhere she knew I would be at. So, I was like, yo, let me sign up to get this lady out my face. They tell me they're sending me to Make the Road. I thought it was a construction company! So I showed up. And it was the first time I was surrounded by

community folk. Like, I don't know how to put it. They just resonated with me. And I didn't realise I was always being challenged in the idea of what my blackness is. I don't know, it just felt mad beautiful. It gives me hope, and this sense of community love.

**Why do you think it is important to be involved in activism right now?**

**Darian:** Our communities have always been repressed, as far back as slavery. One of the strategic principles of slavery was that people who were enslaved were not gonna be able to read and write. So they weren't going to be able to spread ideas, specifically about freedom, liberation, justice, equality. These were things our communities were isolated from. So right now it's important, specifically for young people of colour, to talk and take that message centre-stage. Because young people have always led change in society. If we don't, who does?

**Is policing getting better or worse?**

**Reign:** I feel it's not gonna get better till it disappears. Till it's just gone in general. Cause policing is totally, totally rooted in racism. It's like, no matter how we shift power back to people, they will always be racist, and something's always gonna be happening to bodies of colour, black bodies. It's fucked up. The history of the NYPD is so violent.

**Darian:** James Baldwin said, 'Their very presence is an insult ... even if they spent their entire day feeding gumdrops to children. They represent the force of the white world ... to keep the black man ... in his place.' Everything about the concept of policing in the US started from slave patrols to disrupt, dismantle and destabilise the small communities freed black peoples had. Ultimately the police are not institutions of safety for us.

**What are the things you like most about New York?**

**Darian:** In a city that's made for elites and corporations, really poor people have been able to survive. And not only that, but resist, powerfully. Resist oppression, resist the neglect the government has handed out to our communities. We're becoming more powerful with every generation. [maketheroadnyc.org](#)

# NEW SANCTUARY

Since 2007, the New Sanctuary Coalition of NYC has grown into a city-wide movement working to reform immigration enforcement. Its executive director Ravi Ragbir has been fighting deportation since 2006, following a conviction for wire fraud. ICE agreed to defer his deportation while Ravi, a lawful permanent resident who came to the US from Trinidad in 1991, fought questions around his conviction in court – but on January 11 this year they detained him during a routine check-in and attempted to deport him. One day before his flight, a US district judge ordered he be freed, while his attorneys have claimed he has been targeted by ICE because of his high-profile activism. At time of press, his case continues and, by the time you read this, there is a possibility he may have been deported. We hope that is not the case.

Can you please update us on the latest in your situation?

If the judge issues a bad decision, July 27 will happen (his date to report to ICE for deportation), meaning I will turn myself in. We expect the community will not allow that to happen, but I am still going to show up.

**How will they do that?**

My supporters will be there to tell ICE not to deport me... We don't believe in confrontation. If you look at videos (when Ragbir was detained in January, a dozen of his supporters were arrested) you will see that all my supporters, no one responded aggressively or violently – it was all the police.

**How has your role in the immigration rights fight changed in the last couple of years?**

I never wanted to be a public figure. A lot of my training is teaching (supporters) how to speak for

others. So it was never my intent to be the face of this, but I am in a similar situation many people are in, and I am able to speak for them because a lot of them are terrified. They are living in fear and they break down. I break down a lot. People knew the change in administration would impact hard. I think they would have taken me away last year, but they weren't sure how to. In the last year, it became real for a lot of people. It became real for me and it became real for supporters along with me. Yes, I've been moved into the spotlight, but I'm using this moment to pull people from being protesters to really standing up.

**You would be forgiven for focusing on your own situation. What made you decide you wanted to speak for others in similar situations?**

Yes, it's easy to speak about ourselves. The problem is that when we speak about ourselves, we are victims. When we start talking about others, we start to become leaders. We start to make change. We cannot allow this system to continue the way it is. We need to dismantle and abolish ICE.

**Do you think your activism has made you a target for ICE?**

If we are not targeted, it means we are not doing the right job. The deputy director says he knows exactly where I live. He described my house and street when he was talking to some of my leaders – and you don't take things personally unless you are targeting that person. So, yes – I am a target because of my activism, because of my training people, bringing this to the light. Let us use this opportunity as I continue to become the target.

**Use their actions against them?**

Correct. Because we are learning what they have been doing and highlighting what they are doing, showing how violent they are.

**There are headlines at the moment about the separation of families at borders. Do you think the character of this country has changed in the last couple of years, or is this something that is now being allowed to come out into the open?**

I think it was always there. If you read Michelle Alexander's book *The New Jim Crow*, you will see the insidious ways we have used the laws to affect people of colour. Still, America is the place where (immigrants) can find opportunities. But the question you ask, has it been here? It has, and the president validates the hatred. It passes the buck, 'The president says it, so I'm allowed to say it...' It gives them an opening to not only say stupid things, racist things, but to act – because he is giving them the okay.

**So he ripped off a facade that was covering a lot of the darkness and hatred in America...**

Maybe getting this out into the open is like pus from a wound or something – like now that it's exposed we can deal with it. I mean that optimistically. But we have to deal with it. Not at a later date, we need to deal with it. We are going to deal with it. Everyone has a role to play to stop this. To clean that wound and to get rid of that pus.

**You've been fighting this for 12 years. What gives you the strength to continue?**

Family. My daughter was the main reason I fought to be here. And supporters. There are times when I want to give up but I remember how much people have given up for me. So I cannot disappoint them. The other aspect is that I actually put it aside. I kind of bottle it up,

box it up, and don't deal with it. My wife will tell you that I deal with it badly.

**What can others do to support you and others in this situation?**

If you are a reader who is a citizen of the country you are in, whether Britain or America, you have a privilege, but it does not mean you are the Messiah. So going in with an attitude that "I am going to save you" is not the way to solve this. Taking someone who doesn't know the process and teaching them the process so they are not afraid, but you are standing with them because of privilege the policy does not affect you... Being there in that space is a hurdle that the agency has to overcome. That's one way.

**What do you think of when you think of Trinidad?**

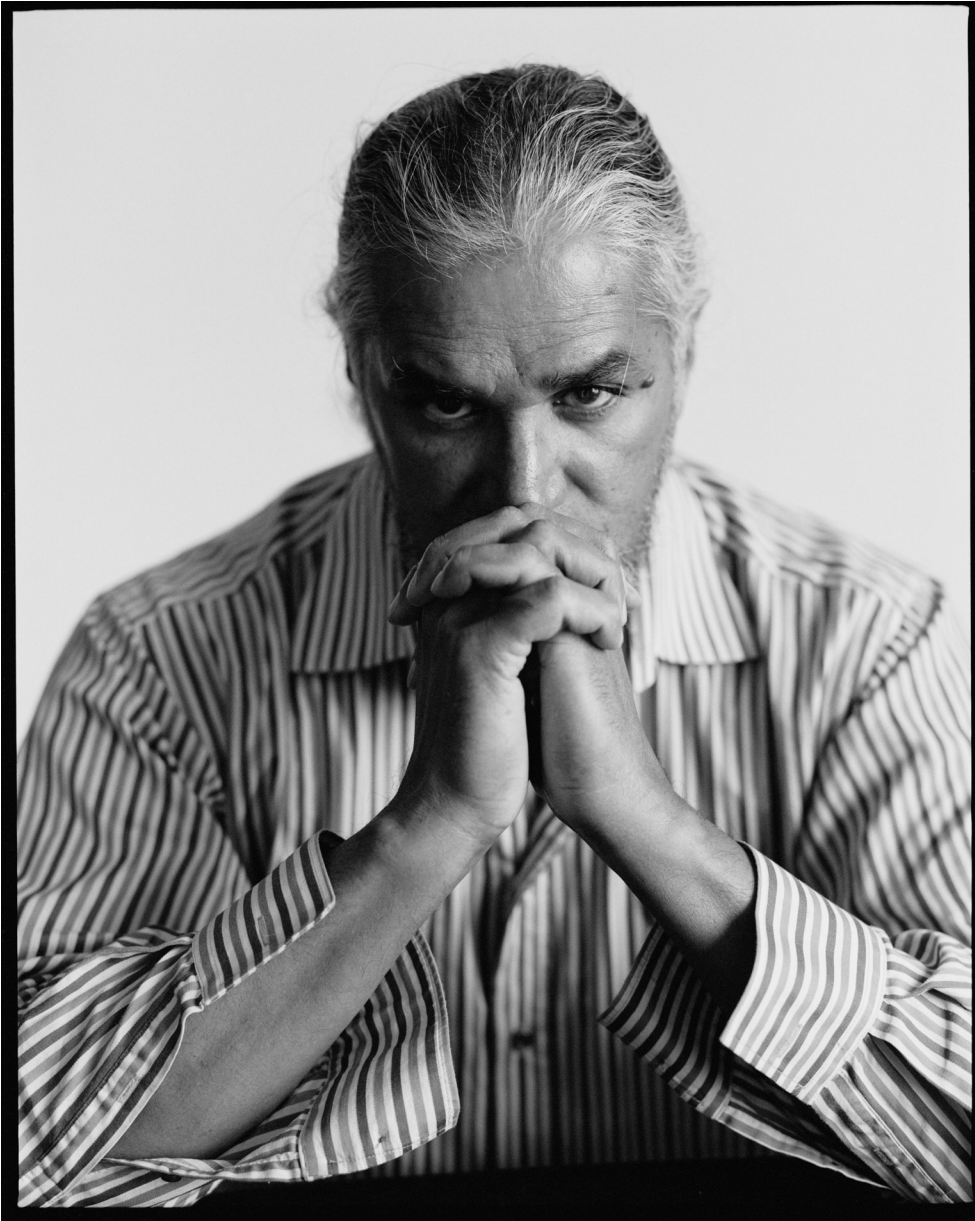
I haven't been in Trinidad since this began – so 19, 20 years. Trinidad is a wonderful country. That is the privilege I have, I can go back and not be afraid for my life. People from Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico don't have that. If they are too public here, their families lives are going to be at risk down there. That is why I am fighting – the process is inhuman.

**What are your favourite things about living in New York?**

New Yorkers. I will strike up conversation because you meet so many interesting people in the subway, on the streets. I hand out my cards to people and say, "If you know anyone who needs help, send them to us." New York conversations are so mind-blowing. I explain to people who want to come visit – I say, just sit down and New York moves around you.

[newsanctuarynyc.org](#)

New York City is home to hundreds of activist groups, some of which have been at the frontlines for decades and some that are newer to the fight. One day, eight organisations, 14 people... This is a cross section of what resistance – New York-style – looks like in 2018. Photography Dan Martensen. Interviews Roderick Stanley



# POP GYM

Pop Gym offers free self-defence, fitness, and skill-share classes to marginalised communities in a safe space in Brooklyn.

Tell us about yourself...

I bounced around a bit from the Tri-state area, moved to Brooklyn a few years back. I've been training in taekwondo since I was five or six, so I'm a third-degree black belt and I've done muay thai, jiu-jitsu, boxing, mixed martial arts. My parents wanted me to know how to defend myself!

**What do you do apart from these workshops?**

I also work with this group Cyber Collective. It's in a similar vein, but for cybersecurity. I do odd jobs here and there, but my main focus are these organisations, because I really like to do them.

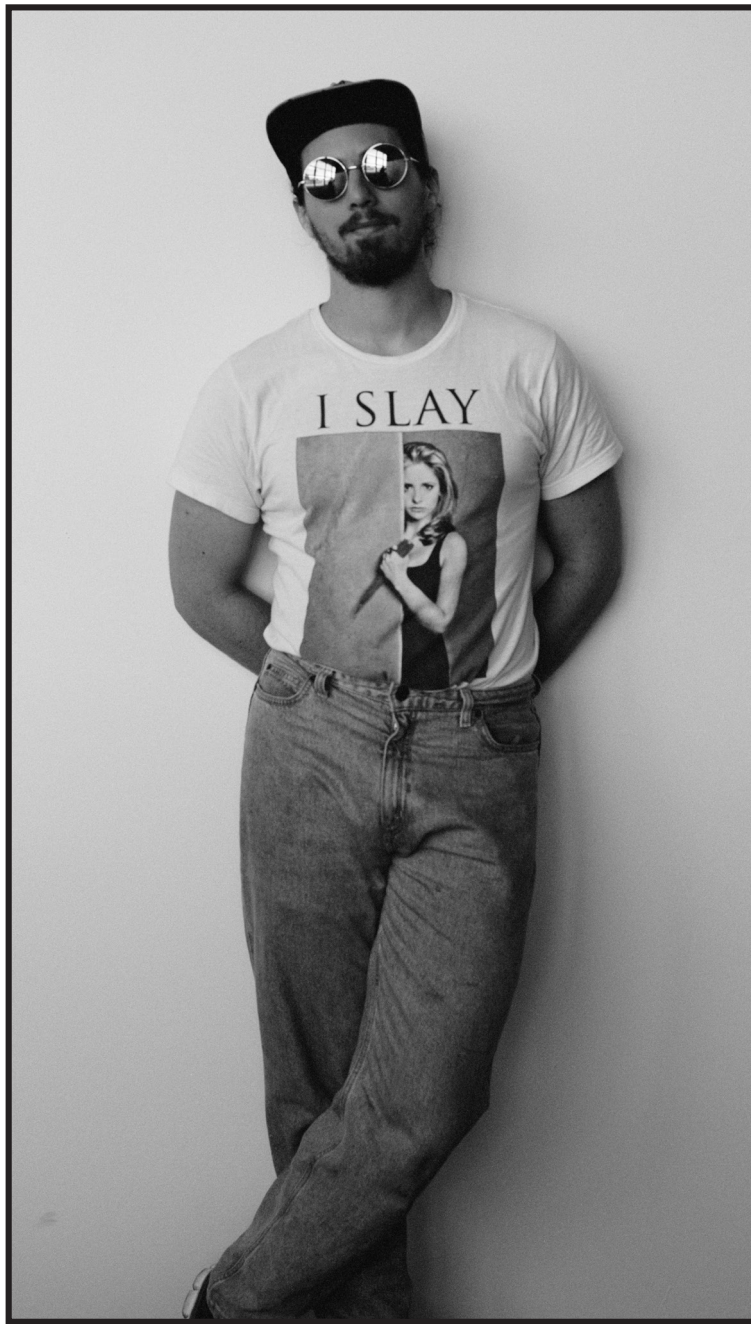
**Why did you set up Pop Gym?**

Really, it's just a group of people, either that have a background in martial arts, or don't but just want to create a space that was less macho, which, unfortunately, is the impression of martial arts: a lot of macho-ness and maleness and toxicity.

**You offer free training to people from marginalised communities?**

Yeah, our focus is to fill in the gaps where we feel like a lot of mainstream martial arts gyms cannot or do not. We're an anti-racist organisation, we're feminist, we're body-positive and queer-positive. We want to be this place where a person can develop an interest, and go back to the gym with a little more confidence.

[popgymnyc.org](#)



# RESISTANCE



The Resistance Revival Chorus is a collective of over 50 women identifying people who bring song to life in the spirit of collective joy and resistance. They have performed at the Grammy Awards with Keshia and at pop-up protest concerts across the country.

Tell us about yourselves...

**Paola:** Ginny and I were also co-founders of the Women's March. I was artistic director, Ginny produced the march, and Sarah Sophie worked as a strategic adviser. While we were working we realised, as Mr Harry Belafonte put it, when the music is strong, the movement is strong. The movement was clearly very strong and what we needed to do was make the music strong.

**How did you all come together?**

**Ginny:** I reached out to tons of amazing women I've worked with in music throughout the years. Our concept was to come together and celebrate noise as a form of resistance, create a sisterhood to uplift protest songs from the past, and write new protest music.

**What does it feel like when you perform?**

**Shantell:** I think building a community with song is something that is just indescribable until you come to a Resistance Revival night. **Arin:** I feel the crowd is always uplifted. They feel the joy we're bringing. We're coming from different walks of life, uniting in this sisterhood, bringing the

"The movement was clearly very strong and what we needed to do was make the music strong"

joy of music to the different issues affecting us all. Why is activism important at this point in time?

**Ginny:** I think this is a very crucial time in our history. A lot of issues have come to the forefront that were taboo before – racism, sexism, equal pay, immigration were things that everyday people just didn't talk about. So the good thing is, we have a lot that we need to work on, but the conversations are being had. Now we can empower ourselves and find a way to make the country better and make the world better.

**What are the aims beyond music?**

**Meah:** Daycare for moms is a painful and difficult endeavour, so we have our system set up to help mothers participate in the chorus. We are radically transparent with regards to finances, because we

feel the secret nature around financials holds back particularly women of colour. With those two small examples, we're trying to create an equitable system that is uplifting women.

**Pauline:** Women (in music) are also grossly underrepresented and underpaid, so it's our mission to create a platform through the Resistance Revival nights, to showcase and uplift women in music.

**Best thing about New York?**

**Ginny:** It's one of the places with the most radical diversity of thoughts, intersections of race, ethnicity and income. People come together around issues who come from such vastly different backgrounds. It's a city rich with ideas. [facebook.com/ResistanceRevivalChorus](#)

# RISE & RESIST

Andy Ratto



Rise and Resist is a direct action group committed to opposing, disrupting and defeating any government act that threatens democracy, equality and our civil liberties.

Tell us a bit about yourself...

I grew up in California and went to school at UC Berkeley. There is a strong history of activism there. Other places I've lived are Jerusalem, Atlanta, now New York. I've had the opportunity to do organising around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, environmentalism, with Occupy, and now with Rise and Resist.

**What is Rise and Resist's mission?**

We grew out of the 2016 election, though a lot of us were not new to activism. We feel it's important to empower people and activate them and bring together like-minded people to do organising. Street protests, raising attention around the issues. I have been trained in civil disobedience. I have been arrested before. People from Rise and Resist came from Act Up and the anti-

nuclear movement and other movements like Occupy.

**Why are these issues important to you?**

**Arin:** I've been wondering, 'What might I have done at previous moments in history?' This is one of those moments where they're taking children away from their parents at the border. They've come here seeking refuge, seeking asylum from dangerous situations, and our government is switching crying children and taking them who knows where, housing them in places reported to have awful conditions. What are the actions we can all take?

**For Rise and Resist, what has meant public actions, visual actions, often with the risk of arrest.**

**How important do you think it is for people to be trained in civil disobedience?**

Especially with Black Lives Matter, what we've seen repeatedly is people filming instances of police brutality and violence. If we want to get off fossil fuels, and even murder, often at great personal risk to themselves. People have faced arrest at that

moment, or long-term police targeting or harassment. For the sort of actions Rise and Resist plans to advance, we like people to be educated for a number of reasons. One, it's important to assert your rights throughout the process. Also, it's important for people to not put other people at risk who are trying to avoid that situation.

**What are the best things about living in New York?**

There is a large, diverse population here that I've been able to collaborate with. We brought together the Reclaim Pride Coalition that's geared around making the New York Pride march in Manhattan less about corporations and having less police presence. Second, I love the food. It's one aspect that I think symbolically represents what makes New York so great. Third, this is the first place I've lived without cars being central to existence.

If we want to get off fossil fuels, it means getting off personal gasoline-powered cars. [resistnyc.org](#)

350 Brooklyn is an affiliate of 350.org that works locally to solve the climate crisis through education, organisation, and direct action.

Tell us a bit about yourself...

I've been in New York since 1999. Brooklyn for 14 years. I work as a copywriter. I've always been aware of and conscious of environmental issues. When Hillary didn't get elected, like a lot of people I freaked out and started reading about different organisations – I'd never gotten involved in activism before that. And I decided to go to a meeting for 350. The meeting was massive. They had a hundred people, whereas before that they were a group of 10 to 20.

**It is hard to confront the scale of the climate crisis?**

I recognise the connections between the climate change and so many other issues. The refugee crisis is a very obvious one. I heard they are projecting that by 2030, or 2035, there will be a billion climate change-related refugees worldwide. People are discussing refugee crises that are being exacerbated by climate change now, but climate change isn't really part of the conversation. This gets to one of the big issues with climate change and how people talk about it. It is really complicated, and because it's connected to so many other things, people can't

focus and nuance gets lost.

**Where does 350 Brooklyn fit into the wider conversation?**

In New York alone, there are so many groups that are focused on climate change. There are more than a hundred. If you're focused on a specific aspect, it may not be something that gets lots of headlines, but if you go deep on that issue, and you know who to talk to, who to put pressure on to make change, you might be able to actually make a small – not headline-grabbing – but still real piece of change, right? That's one thing 350 Brooklyn does.

**How do you stay motivated?**

There's a book I've been reading that's helped me put some of this stuff in perspective, and ... given me a bit of solace, I guess. It's called *Hope in the Dark* by Rebecca Solnit. Her main message is (that) through activism of any form, it's important to celebrate the victories when they happen because it's always a struggle, it's never-ending.

**Favourite thing about New York?**

I'm a DJ, and the incredible depth and breadth of the music scene here is amazing. Almost any night I want to go out and see someone else play music, I have to choose between two or even three people I really want to see. [350brooklyn.org](#)



# 350 BROOKLYN

Jesse Mann

Empire State Indivisible is an Indivisible group with members from all five boroughs of New York City. Indivisible is a grassroots political pressure group that follows the tactics of the Indivisible Guide, a PDF that was circulated after the 2016 election by former Obama staffers.

Tell us a bit about yourselves and how you came to Indivisible...

**Heather:** I came from the Midwest. I've had several different jobs since I've been here, the most recent of which is TV writing. What happened to me was there was just a rip in my psyche. I don't know how else to explain it, after the election. I have a son, and realised I have to do something to move things forward and get through this time period. I owe it to him, since he's watching me in tears every day. I was at home in St. Louis, and my dad voted for Trump. So I was miserable the entire time. Then I came across (the Indivisible PDF) and immediately it made sense.

**Michael:** I've been in New York since '98. From Michigan originally. I always voted, but I wasn't political. The guide clicked with me because some research had went into it, and I like to dig underneath the surface. One of the mottoes of the Indivisibles is how to make Congress listen, so it sounded like it would have a legitimate result. And our chemistry as a group just worked.

**Has the focus of Indivisible shifted since then?**

**Heather:** We have become more focused as Empire State Indivisible on the state of New York. So, we are looking very closely at the governor race and the state Senate. And as soon as we started to focus toward

what was happening here, we realised we had a lot of work to do, and that was going to keep us plenty busy here. And, of course, the issues are the same.

**National politics is complicated enough, but how do you get people motivated in state politics?**

**Michael:** We almost had to discover a language to use in order to connect with people around issues that are complicated. They're sometimes confusing and they change quickly.

**Heather:** We've watched, over the last year and a half, an electorate go from fairly unaware of what was happening in the state Senate to incredibly sophisticated. So that's been wonderful.

**How do you work with other organisations that work in these areas?**

**Michael:** We're a new group, and it's really important for us to respect the work of other groups that have been doing this for years, if not decades. So we're really sensitive to that. We will ask groups, "How can we help support your work?"

**It's a "network of networks"...**

**Michael:** There's a sense of the interconnectedness of this movement that is really powerful. I don't think it's completely dismissed by people yet. So that's something that I'm following. Like, I'm on a journey to find out where that leads, because people are starting to talk about it more.

**Favourite things about New York?**

**Heather:** I love the architecture. I love the neighbourhoods. And the diversity of the city. It's the reason why I moved here.

**Michael:** I'm a book guy, so it's the music and stores. And the "New York minute". I love the speed. [empirestateindivisible.org](#)



# GRAY PANTHERS

Jack Kupferman

The Gray Panthers fight ageism and other social justice issues. Activist Maggie Kuhn formed the movement in response to being forced to retire from her job at the age of 65, all the way back in 1970.

Tell us about yourself.

I've been working with older people longer than anyone has ever been old. And that is not an exaggeration. My parents owned a rest home in Rockland County, so from the age of three until now – I'm 63 – I've been working with older people. All my adult life, I've been an attorney. The real satisfaction in life for me is the opportunity to improve the quality of life for older persons.

**How did you get involved with the Gray Panthers?**

Gray Panthers has been around since the 70s and the time of those big movements, civil rights, women's gay liberation, all of them, when the country was in such turmoil as it is now. Maggie Kuhn was one of my heroes. I learned about her in college. The opportunity came to me about 12 years ago.

**Ageism is a less discussed issue.**

Ageism is the underacknowledged "ism" – because nobody hates old people, they just ignore them. On top of that, there has never been a cohort of a billion people who are now over the age of 60. One billion globally! If you're lucky, you'll be one of them. It is an "ism" by invisibility. If we improve the quality of life for older people, we improve the quality of life



[graypanthersnyc.org](#)



# 10 KOREA OPPORTUNITIES

PHOTOGRAPHY



**DARK HORSE** – A demonstrator rides a fibreglass horse in Gwanghwamun Square to deliver his protest message to others.



**WAITING IN THE WINGS** – A young child sits with friends and family before participating in a parade celebrating Park Geun-hye's official removal from office.



**NO REST** – A demonstrator wearing pajamas impersonates the US president during an anti-Trump protest.



**FACE VALUE** – Demonstrators display anti-Trump imagery in Seoul before his arrival.



**SEOUL SPIRIT** – As traditional musicians play, others chant and lose themselves in dance during the 19th straight weekend of demonstrations.



**STUDENT PROTESTERS MARCH** – Among the most vocal and energetic groups taking part in the anti-president demonstrations are young South Korean students.



**Resistance** – An overwhelming number of police confront protesters around downtown Seoul. Through physical presence, they easily barricade numerous public streets.

Korean-American photographer ARGUS PAUL ESTABROOK went to South Korea to teach English, but found himself winning awards for his dazzling images of Seoul's downtown protest scene

Threading between the US embassy, the presidential Blue House and a handful of arcane war memorials, Gwanghwamun Plaza is the unofficial bottleneck for protests in downtown Seoul. In 2016, it was the flashpoint for the country's largest demonstration in three decades, in which over a million marched for the impeachment of president Park Geun-hye. This year, activists shut down the zone's arterial roads to protest vast redevelopment proposals, a facelift that threatens to suffocate the thriving protest scene.

It's a spot that Korean-American photographer Argus Paul Estabrook visits almost every weekend, capturing ground-level unrest with a juddering boldness that verges on graphic-novel. Estabrook moved to Korea from rural Virginia, initially taking streetwise candid shots to help develop his illustration work. In 2016, his breakout series *Losing Face* surveyed oscillating tensions around President Park's offices, and landed him a coveted Magnum Photography Award. Last year's *Heartfelt Welcome* mined even deeper into the local psyche, exploring Korean identity in the heat of anti-Trump tensions. "I'm trying to show the energy that's behind the protest," Estabrook says of his work. "How do you take a photo of somebody's spirit?"

By the sounds of it, you weren't always this political. How did you find yourself in the heart of South Korea's protest scene?

I've never tried to be political or set that out as an aim. But I just feel in today's climate, these last few years, you can't help but be political. It just seems like life is political no matter what you fucking do. After I finished my MFA, I needed to pay off my student loans and they have these "teach English" programs that pay for your airplane ticket. I really wanted to come to Korea and learn about this culture that I was kind of divorced from growing up in Virginia. I wasn't part of any Korean community in Charlottesville and, you know, there weren't really any Koreans around. There was a lot of racism, a lot of prejudice. I just wanted to see what it was like on the other side, and when I got here I didn't really mean to start doing anything political. I was using my camera to take photos to remember things, and to gather source materials to draw from later. But I was really interested in exploring Korean identity for myself, trying to catch up as quickly as possible and ask myself, "Am I really Korean? What's it like to be Korean?" I think all of my work is kind of identity-based in this way.

When I started getting into street photography, I would head downtown, and I would start bumping into protests. The first one I found was an anti-LGBTQ, hard-Christian one, trying to say that gay marriage was bad and sinful. I just started noticing that all these protests were always happening downtown for one reason or another – it's kind of refreshing that Korea has this spirit; it they are really upset about something, they really organise and get together. There was a quick protest on Friday against Trump, and I wanted to see if there was anything going on for Saturday. While I was there, three protests were happening: an anti-Moon (current president Moon Jae-in) protest, an anti-Trump protest, and another.

Your lens gets pretty close to protesters' faces, really capturing the nuanced emotions of the scenes.

When I take photos, a lot of times I'll get really close to somebody – I could even talk to them. I don't like taking pictures of people far away because it kind of feels like you're spying. My proximity to a person isn't to facilitate an awareness they are on camera, but it's fine to let them know that I'm taking their picture. My natural body language lets them know that I'm not trying to take a photograph that's going to be used against them. I mean, some of the protests I cover, I totally disagree with. Recently, there have been a lot of pro-Trump protests, but I still have this attitude – I'm not trying to hurt anybody. I'm still full of empathy even for people that I dislike. I want to be able to have a dialogue with the people I'm capturing and you can't do that when you have an energy that's like, "I fucking hate you, and I'm gonna take a photo that's gonna make you look ugly." That's not what it's about and that's not what I'm about. I want my photos to relate to the overall mood that I'm sensing, and everything else is secondary. It's evidence of the mood, the spirit, the feeling, the energy. ★

WORDS BY JACK MILLS / WITH THANKS TO VALERY JUNG ESTABROOK

#DOSOMETHINGFORNOTHING



Michael

## HAIRCUTS FOR THE HOMELESS

JOSHUA COOMBES travels the world giving haircuts for free to homeless people. Good Trouble had a coffee with him in New York.

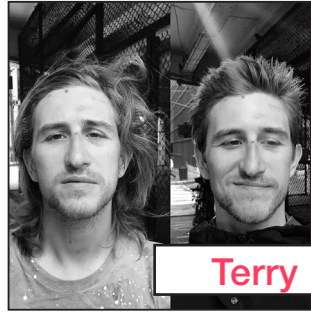
A few years ago, Joshua Coombes started the hashtag #DoSomethingForNothing, hoping to encourage people to do something positive and give their time with no expectation of reward. It started when he was working as a hairstylist in Clapham, London, and got talking to a young man on the street who was the same age as him at the time (27). After learning about how the man grew up with a dad who was a heroin addict, Joshua offered to give him a haircut. "It was what I could offer," he says. "And then it just turned into more. Then two



Rubin

How do you fund what you do?

For the first year I was doing this, I was still working at the salon. It got to a point where I was working with different organisations. I worked in Athens with these guys in a nonprofit in Greece. They flew me over to work with refugee communities but also homeless people there. So it was like, these emails started to come in where people wanted to collaborate. It's just grown and grown... But the coolest thing about this is, this isn't just about me, it's a hashtag, it's #DoSomethingForNothing.



Terry

Tell us more about that...

Not everyone's a hairdresser. Everyone's thing might not be people who are on the street. The idea is, do something for nothing – whatever your thing is, your passion or whatever you love doing, it's a great way to go out and make someone smile. If you dig this and want to get involved, it's there. So we've had people posting the hashtag. The first person, this girl Jade, started coming and looking after people's dogs on the street. There's a guy called Christian in New York, he goes out and plays guitar. People are now using art, there's a yoga instructor giving free classes.

Have you ever run into trouble with authorities?

Well, the Underground in London a couple of times. Police on the streets sometimes, they're usually super nice. The big thing recently, though, was in New York where I was cutting hair on a side street and a security guard came up. It's getting dark.



Gerald

How do you describe what you do?

I talk about the idea of charity being reframed completely. Because what I do is not charity. It's truly because we're both human. I'm not "giving back". I'm like, "I ain't got enough to give apart from me." I'm not sitting on a trust fund. I think "I" is the best thing everyone can give, really.

And he's shouting at us. He even got his walkie-talkie thing, and started, while I was cutting someone's hair, trying to hit me with his thing! He was shouting louder and louder. But 99% of the time, what happens is lots of people stop, and it's a way for others to have conversations, too.



James

What are your plans to grow this?

Trying to get all this stuff in a book off. Speaking about it in different schools. Putting on art shows is a big thing for me. I love art and music, and what excites me more than anything is using creativity to make an impact.

What's the biggest thing you've learned?

I used to be in a punk band, a guitarist. Dead City Stereo. And I was in LA recently, with this guy I'd spent all day hanging out with. On the way to cut his hair at a park, we stopped in a coffee shop. Just like this one. And every tattooed, pierced person with a MacBook... Look,



C-Westy

I'm one of those. I'm not saying I'm any different. But it was like, "Homeless guy, café, what the fuck?" He felt it. I felt it. We've got to work on that. Because being an alternative, artistic person, what does that truly mean to you? Because for me it means being accepting of people. It truly means being open to listen to people. We've got to get real. Through creativity, I think that's a great way to start doing that again. ★

WORDS BY RODERICK STANLEY



Malory

# REBEL RESCUERS

Mediterranean migrant rescue organisation SEA-WATCH has so far been involved in the rescue of well over 35,000 people. But it's an all-volunteer crew composed of everyday people from German IT specialists to Basque lifeguards. Photography by Roman Kutzowitz



On a Sunday in June, more than 100 migrants were killed after a boat sunk in the waters off Tunisia, in (at time of press) the deadliest migrant disaster in 2018. In the ongoing refugee crisis in the Mediterranean, human traffickers are increasingly using Tunisia as a launch pad for migrants headed to Europe, because of difficulties faced from armed groups in Libya. UN refugee agency UNHCR is advocating for safe routes for refugees to travel "so that these unnecessary deaths don't take place"; spokesman William Spindler said in a briefing, "People should be able to find protection and travel in a legal, safe way."

In the meantime, the situation in the Mediterranean remains dire, and more than 1,000 migrants have died at sea just in the first half of 2018. One organisation taking matters into its own hands is Sea-Watch, a nonprofit that conducts search-and-rescue operations in the central Mediterranean. Formed at the end of 2014, Sea-Watch is a volunteer initiative of people who "could not stand on the sidelines witnessing people dying in the Mediterranean Sea any longer". They are politically and religiously independent and funded only by donations. They say they are filling the gap of an institutional sea rescue plan with a clear mandate – in essence, saving lives and doing what the EU will not. Sea-Watch says it has so far been involved in the rescue of more than 35,000 people. Photographer Roman Kutzowitz spent time on board the Sea-Watch 3, which patrols the Libyan 24-mile nautical zone, and sent us these images of a rescue.

"The Mediterranean Sea is the world's deadliest border," says Kutzowitz, "but the faces of this humanitarian intervention here are not aid workers or peacekeeping forces, just an IT nerd from Cologne, Germany, fixing the wiring on board the Sea-Watch 3, or a lifeguard from the Basque Country tending to the torture-inflicted wounds of a rescued migrant." We spoke to Sea-Watch's communications officer Oliver Kulikowski to find out more.

On just one day (Friday, April 13), Sea-Watch 3 rescued more than 300 people from boats in distress. In Sea-Watch, how has the situation changed?

The number of crossings over the central Mediterranean route has gone down, compared with the last year. At the same time, the mortality rate among those trying to leave Libya rose to a record high. We have experienced a change in the state of health of people on the boats recently, with significantly more being severely weak, malnour-

ished and mistreated. The situation in Libya is horrific – migrants are held captive in camps where they are exposed to systematic torture. In an internal diplomatic report, the German Foreign Office speaks of "concentration camp-like" conditions. At the same time, the work of civil rescue organisations is impeded and criminalised, and the European Union is trying everything to prevent migrants from reaching Europe. The humanitarian crisis on the Mediterranean is far from being over, and no dirty deal with Libya or Turkey will hold back people trying to flee the living hell they are in.

What was the key moment that made you decide to quit what you were doing and commit to what you're doing now?

I was working for a union before and was part of social movements for years; now I'm part of the Sea-Watch media team. I was following the beginning of Sea-Watch quite closely, and I was impressed by their spirit. I don't think there was really a key moment for me – it felt more like a logical consequence to join. In times where a lot of people feel powerless and unable to change the terrible conditions surrounding us, there were some people that just started with nothing more than an old fishing cutter and a strong dedication to challenge Europe's deadly border policy. Today, Sea-Watch is part of a civil fleet that is the most crucial factor in saving people from drowning in the Mediterranean.

Sea-Watch has so far been involved in the rescue of well over 35,000 people. Yet it's an all-volunteer force filling a gap. What are the EU and nation states doing wrong in your view, and what should they be doing to help with this refugee crisis on its border?

We are confronted with a human rights crisis, not a refugee crisis. The European Union has to decide whether they want to fight migration by all means or respect human rights. You can't have both. If you want to prevent human rights violations on migration routes, there's only one answer: to provide safe and legal entryways, a safe passage. Why is Italy coordinating "pull-backs" with the so-called Libyan coastguard, and why is that something you're resisting? What can you update us about your ongoing legal proceedings?

First of all, returning people in flight to territorial waters is illegal according to the "non-refoulement" principle enshrined in international law. Maritime law also tells us that the people must be taken to the nearest safe harbour, and Libya is not classified as safe by the EU. These pull-backs are one feature of a

growing practice, which impinges on migrant rights while relying on techniques of avoidance of legal responsibility. At the moment, Sea-Watch is supporting 17 survivors of a fatal boat accident of November 6, 2017, who are taking legal action against the illegal pull-backs backed by the EU, and for the first time, addressing their case to the European Court of Human Rights. To be fair, one has to admit Italy has pretty much been left alone by the European Union when it comes to migration. On the other hand, there are other options than coordinating pull-backs by the Libyan so-called coast guards – attacking the Dublin Regulation for example, which gives western countries like Germany a very comfortable position, as migrants can only apply for asylum in the European country they enter first.

We've heard about the far-right groups that have boats and are trying to impede rescue missions. How much of a threat do they pose in reality, and is that increasing or decreasing? What direct encounters have you had with these groups, and what was the outcome?

There was a ship of Generation Identity on the Mediterranean in 2017. But, after embarrassing themselves enough, they were gone again after a while. Some of their Sri Lankan crew jumped ship when it docked in Cyprus, and several reportedly asked for asylum. The far-right group was advised not to anchor in Greece or Sicily for fear of protests, and their vessel was prevented by Tunisian fishermen from putting into the port of Zarzis for supplies. We were lucky they didn't actually get involved in a rescue, since these operations are complicated and dangerous. The danger of them messing up and eventually killing people was quite high.

What is the best way for people to support your mission, should they wish to? There's a lot of ways to support us. You can spread the word about our missions and speak up against the inhumane migration policies of the European Union. And, since we are a volunteer organisation not affiliated with any political party or religious organisation, any donation helps us a lot. ★

WORDS BY RODERICK STANLEY / SEA-WATCH.ORG

MIXTAPE

## DJ DEEP STATE'S SURVEILLANCE PLAYLIST (PT2)



1. 2 Chainz f/ Pharrell – 'Feds Watching'
2. Nine Inch Nails – 'Satellite'
3. Jill Scott – 'Watching Me'
4. The Firm – 'Phone Tap'
5. Public Enemy – 'Louder Than a Bomb'

IN CONVERSATION 11  
MATTHEW SMITH & DR. RACHAEL KIDDEY

Matthew Smith's archive photography of British race, traveller and protest culture of the late 80s and early 90s was featured in the first issue of *Good Trouble*, and has been collected in a book called *Exist to Resist*. Matt also works with the Independent Social Research Foundation, which is a (it says here) "public benefit foundation funded by a group of private philanthropists with interests in academia and social science, founded in 2008". Its academic editor is Rachael Kiddey, postdoctoral researcher on "architectures of displacement" at Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, and has published on homelessness and political unrest. We interrupted Kiddey's holiday and got her and Matt to ask each other some questions.

R: That's ethnography. From an academic point of view, that is what you do – in order to understand a particular culture, you live with those people and make notes on everything they do, say, eat, rituals that they might perform. M: I just decided it wasn't enough to just look at stuff. It was essential to take part and to stand up for what you believed in.

R: What function do you hope your images will play? M: The biggest reaction consistently is that it is amazing how much freedom we have lost in the space of just a small section of my lifetime.

R: What do you want to come from that? M: Change. There's a great quote that says, "Art is not a mirror with which to reflect reality, it is a hammer with which to shape it." I think that's what we need to work towards as artists.

R: We have different tools, but I think we're working towards the same aim. M: What happened with rave culture, it mobilised people in a way that I think really frightened government. I found it to be incredibly democratic. Members of society from a diverse range of backgrounds came together because they wanted to be together.

R: That might be the drugs! M: One of the best venues we ever had in London was Camden Parkway cinema. Through the Criminal Justice Act and collaborative opposition to government, we met a whole swath of people whose purpose in life was to take big profits and use them as community centres. If you can teach people to exist together, be together, regulate their own behaviour, police themselves, then surely you're looking at a much more successful society than you are when you're looking at one which has to be regulated by an external force that is activated by violence.

R: Just since the 2008 recession, there's been a massive wedge put between people who have access to good housing, education, possibility of a future, and those who don't. I think any projects that draw together those who have the skills, knowledge, time and financial resources to be able to draw attention and change things, we need to be opening out a lot more, and it feels as though the whole approach currently is to close it down, whether it's borders, Brexit... I think you're right: a mass community project where we bring people together to rub shoulders with people different from them, in a way different from raves but in a similar, we'd probably call it a "Berlin attitude", where you just get on and do it yourself.

M: I think those are the times we live in. Digital technology, with its ability to enable people to communicate, has become so widespread, and it's very visible how governments are leaning on internet providers to stop people communicating. Governments are essentially markets; they're in the market for authority and want to control the rules of that market. Enabling people to communicate freely is something that is very dangerous to the maintenance of that market. ★

ist.org



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SATANISM

JEX BLACKMORE is a performance artist and activist leading a rebellious community of outcasts to challenge conformity and defend civil liberties. Oh, and she’s a Satanist, too. Charlie Utz went to Detroit to meet the charming former spokesperson for the Satanic Temple. Photography Alex Austin

JEX-BRAT-EL



Jex Blackmore reminds us that people have the power. She hopes her performance art and theatrical protests inspire people to challenge systems of authority. She is also a Satanist, and her rituals and activist projects have received a lot of heat. It is now easier for a neo-Nazi book event spaces than it is for her.

It's dreary and overcast in Detroit as we slice through the empty neighbourhoods to Jex Blackmore's studio. A text message provided the whereabouts – a funny riddle I would have liked to share, but for her safety we can't provide any breadcrumbs. On arrival, she walks to us with a welcoming smile, with black tousled hair and a large camouflage jacket. Her boots are decorated in chains and her hands are heavy with silver jewellery. We walk through the studio discussing past performances and plans to go watch a renegade molten iron pouring later that afternoon. A neon light fabricator shares the space, and pinks and blues dance around the room; a pink Jex Hex leans against a table, a recurring symbol in a few of her performances. Above her desk is a mirror, with permanent marker scratchings reading: "BIRTH CONTROL AS PROXY FOR RELIGIOUS DOMINANCE".

For the last few years, I have been intrigued by the Satanic Temple of Detroit's efforts to defend human rights, specifically women's reproductive rights. As the temple started to gain momentum, Blackmore appeared on the scene and dived into the deep end of public relations, setting about destigmatising Satanism and turning the temple into a community of rebellious outcasts defending civil liberties. Evangelical Christian groups, neo-Nazis, right-wing protesters and most recently the Westboro Baptist Church are among those who have gone head-to-head with Blackmore, a calm and confident opponent with a quick wit and sharp tongue.

Unmother was the first project by Blackmore that drew me into her world – a transparent and honest live blog, a daily entry from the moment she discovered she was pregnant right through to the termination. There was also the controversial 'The Future of Baby Is Now', which garnered attention as a performance piece: "fetish babies" – adults in baby masks, diapers and BDSM gear – gathered next to pro-life protests at Planned Parenthood loca-

tions, in a counter-protest intended to expose the idolising of the foetus as a kind of demigod. The theatrics of these BDSM babies, half-naked, moaning and pouring milk on one another, highlighted the absurdity of the anti-choice movement and its grotesque position on reproductive rights. It was also really funny.

Riddled with controversy, Blackmore's ever-evolving, boundary-pushing performances have also included naked, chained bodies, pig heads impaled on stakes, goat "births", crucifixes dragged down the street and even "Alt-Right Clowns". Her performances are so outlandish and powerful that recently she and the temple have parted ways. After a fruitful few years, Blackmore is now finding new and bold ways to continue the fight.

**Let's begin with how you got involved with the Satanic Temple. I've been reading about you studying classical literature, archaeology and art history - how did you go from that to the Temple?**

I self-identified as a Satanist in my later teens and was engaged in doing ritual performances with people. I had just moved back here and heard that the Satanic Temple (a then-new Satanic organisation) was doing a talk at Harvard University. I was very curious and I had just started a blog I made called Raw Pussy – just about radical people throughout history and radical people currently working – and I wanted to meet up with Lucien (Greaves), the founder, just to see what that was about. I flew to Boston and met up with him and then we were talking and realised that we had very similar ideas on the way that Satanism

should be used as an informal organisation. Because a lot of people identify as Satanists, especially in the black metal scene and that subculture – it's a very private practice. The idea that Satanism as a philosophy is one of action and engaging in activism and challenging corrupt systems of power is something I firmly and strongly believe in, and so we saw eye-to-eye on that and started

collaborating on ideas. They then asked me if I wanted to come on board, to join up and be the public face and work with them, and so I agreed to do that.

**Was all that interaction with the public informing your practice at the time?**

The first action I participated in (in) with them was when we did the Black Mass at Harvard Square, an educational re-enactment and then a lecture from a Harvard professor, and then the Catholic Diocese in Boston just flipped out and they were calling for it to be shut down and the president of Harvard was like, "Oh, well, this Black Mass is hate speech!" They weren't taking anybody seriously or interviewing anyone seriously and so all our venues got shut down, because people were trying to threaten it.

The city was going to take away the liquor licence for a bar that that was going to be hosting, and so on. We just went to Harvard Square and nobody really knew what to do and there were a lot of people there and we had to rally for all the punks that were there. And I was like, "Well, I'm going to get on this table and get people excited and figure out what to do!" The media was paying attention, so this was now a spectacle and we are now able to open it up to say, "Who gets to decide what religion is legitimate, who gets to decide what speech is permitted, and where do we draw those lines?"

**I wanted to ask you about a performance you did in New York, 'The Sabbath Cycle'?**

It was during the election cycle, where candidates were like, "Well, we want to bring back this good Christian America." I mean, the roots of Christian America are awful and just extremely oppressive and damaging to society, and racist and all these other things.

Each element of the ritual was part of a Satanic awakening, in that you're aware of the social construct that asks us to conform to certain norms that are harmful, and then freeing yourself from that – and dismantling it as a form of self-liberation.

We didn't want it to be a party. We wanted it to be difficult, with certain elements that were challenging – people who attended would be forced to contend with their own insecurities and norms. We used a lot of nudity, nude men in particular, because Satanism traditionally really goes overboard with naked beautiful women and it's a really tired trope to me.

**You had two naked men in your latest performance here as well...**

I like using men! Or, not normal-bodied people – in LA, during the 'Sabbath Cycle' ritual we did this piece, it's this "milk mother" idea. I always try to recruit men 50+ over and about 200 to 250 pounds – it's hard to get them to agree to be naked in front of a group of people. But I've done it twice now. Just the idea of walking into a space and seeing a bunch of nude, round men rubbing milk all over their bodies and one woman in the centre, who's also large... It's this erotic scene that's non-normative and also plays on representations of motherhood.

We are transforming and challenging what people feel comfortable with. Hopefully, when the ritual is over and we just let people party, we hope that space and environment stays with them. They'll go home and think about that forever, and it will make them think.

**Do you think the controversial theatrics in your performances are employed so you can leave a mark on people - so they can reflect on those issues?**

I really believe that being comfortable is extremely dangerous. This idea that if you're comfortable, you are already under attack. It's a façade and it creates an environment where people can be apathetic and not engaged. I think it's good for us to push the boundaries. And also to challenge people to consider how they think of certain issues. For example, when it comes to doing this stuff on the street about abortion – we think, well, what are the ways we can talk about this issue or challenge it, and how can we make that radical?

**Let's talk about the Unmother project. Could you explain your intent behind that and the level of transparency in it?**

My approach to everything is usually "What's the problem? How could I resolve it? What's my approach and how can I achieve that with the resources that I have?" Which is basically no money and relatively little power. One reason I do a lot of performance art is because if you don't have a lot of resources but you have a group of people and an idea – and you know how to put a press release out – then you can get people to pay attention to your issue.

So, with *Unmother* I had already been working on access to abortion and reproductive justice for a while, and when I found out I was pregnant I thought, *Can I do something with this, if this is going to happen?* I thought that if I just write for a couple of weeks about what it was like, without political argument, without saying whether abortion is right or wrong, then it was just like, "This

is what it's like to experience this." Especially in the time leading up to an abortion, because people talk about it like "my abortion was painful or it wasn't painful" but there is this whole other world that surrounds the procedure that you have to deal with. And it gets harder and harder as the abortion regulations get stricter in regards to things like waiting periods.

It was really hard, because just waiting to get an abortion and being pregnant at the same time is difficult. It's easier to forget that this is happening to your body or forget the struggle, but because I was writing about it I was focusing on it, deep into how I was feeling. I didn't expect it to go viral or have a lot of people pay attention to it.

**How was it received?**

I was really surprised that people wanted to write about it. I expected to receive a lot of hate mail, and I definitely did, I still get hate mail every Mother's Day now. People are like, "Happy Mother's Day, Jex!" – like, implying I should be sad every Mothers Day?! But I didn't expect this much positive feedback, and people were writing to me and talking about how validating it was hearing the process being written about. The publicity around the blog really served as a catalyst to create a community of people who are supporting each other through pretty difficult abortion experiences, and it made me feel really hopeful about the amount of people who are supportive and kind. Also, it was so tragic to hear about people's experiences and how awful they had been. There were a couple of girls under the age of 20 who I corresponded with, and they were at a Catholic home and they were trying to hide the abortion from their parents in the same house, and it was just so hard.

**With regards to recent news with the current administration "gagging" doctors, what are your thoughts on that?**

The "Southern Strategy" was this thing in the 70s that was trying to get disaffected voters from the South – religious voters in particular, and evangelicals – to vote Republican (for Nixon). And they basically appealed to their racism. And it worked really well. All of a sudden, abortion became an issue for Republicans. Trump very strongly appealed to religious voters, and that's why Pence was his running mate and why he has taken a more conservative stand on things like abortion. It's worked out extremely well for him. It's not really a surprise that women's reproductive issues are tied to racism and money and power. These are just ideological pushes in order to further polarise the voting base at a great cost

to women, and it should frankly be illegal because it's not based in science or medicine – it's based in religious philosophy and religious dogma, and instead it's becoming policy.

**Would you feel comfortable talking about leaving the Satanic Temple of Detroit? How recent is this? A few weeks?**

Yeah, March-ish. The Satanic Temple had really changed since I joined. When I joined, there were, like, four of us doing everything, and I wanted to find a way of bringing it to the streets and giving people power, so it's not just us doing everything. I helped start the chapter system, and it grew really fast – and, as anything with organisations, they experience growing pains and there are questions on how to manage that growth. There were some disagreements of how to do that successfully in the group, and as it had grown there was some concern that the political performance art I was engaging in, which I think inspired a lot of people to join the Temple, was potentially too extreme. It was potentially legally problematic, although I don't agree with that fear but I understand.



**Was that when you would do your performance pieces in duality with the Temple?**

Yeah, I was doing my own performance art and ritual pieces in public, not under the Satanic Temple, just under my own name, and it made them more nervous. It was just too extreme.

**I think that the power of belonging to a Satanic organisation is that you're really pushing the envelope, because that's what it means to be a Satanist. It's to challenge, to be an outsider and accept that, but also challenge these kinds of norms**

My frustration is that I still get hit up all the time by people, like "At my kid's school, they're forcing them to read Bibles"... but you don't have to reach out to me in order to do this! People have the power to challenge those institutions themselves, and they don't need an institution like the Satanic Temple, or anyone else, to get work done.

If you want to see change, it means that you have to get uncomfortable and we have to really challenge ourselves in ways that maybe we are not used to.

**Making people uncomfortable underpins most of your work. In regards to the performance you did in 'Subversive Autonomous' in an unknown location in Detroit, how did people get access? Thinking about making people uncomfortable, and bringing these concepts to people who don't usually have access to it.**

It's always a problem! It's a problem be-

cause you can't say "doing a Satanic ritual" anywhere, and even if you try to hide it from a legitimate venue, you can't invite people publicly. They will get calls from the city, people will threaten to burn the building down, it's impossible! I have a harder time than neo-Nazis do getting a space!

**That's terrifying and also probably very accurate.**

It's a very real thing. It's always a challenge to figure how to actually do this. We found a good space that was super open to the idea. They were even willing to accept there might be protesters if it got out, but we tried really hard not to (have that happen). There are different types of performances we do. One is knowing that protesters will show up and using that as a catalyst for the message – and others are just where we want to build community and support people that we are around, with the youth community in particular. This was one of those.

We found a location that was already having a massive party, a Christmas tree-burning party. Hundreds of kids came out, it was outdoors and a very wild time. We did it in the warehouse next door. We wanted to promote it to people using flyers with a calling number, so we were able to release the address the day before to anyone who called in. So, basically, it's just levels of filtering people, and how much effort they're willing to put in to find out where it's at. But also just doing it in a place where hundreds of people would already be, or young people partying.

It's the idea of not doing a performance piece in a space where people know what they are going into, but going to where people are instead. Bringing them into your experience and sharing that with them. We want to find out where the community is and we want to go to them. ●



Pioneering British artist YINKA SHONIBARE is curating an all-star cast of African and diaspora artists, including KEHINDE WILEY, LUBAINA HIMID and MICKALENE THOMAS. William Alderwick visits him in his studio to talk magic, Brexit and 'beauty as resistance'



Seemingly part-flag, part-sail, the curving fibreglass sculpture outside the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art in Washington DC is resplendent with batik-inspired patterning. 'Wind Sculpture VII' by British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare MBE invokes the trade winds that shaped the first waves of globalisation through empire and the slavery that carried black bodies to the Americas.

It's complex and multi-layered, yet deceptively simple and easy to grasp. A fabric sail catches the wind and carries you in a direction. Frozen in motion, it becomes a portrait of a moment in time and all the forces that give it shape.

Against today's charged cultural and political backdrop, Shonibare is turning curator for a show at Stephen Friedman Gallery in London's West End, exploring beauty and the political. *Talisman in the Age of Difference* features a strong, fresh and educational list of outstanding artists, predominantly African, African-American or from the African diaspora: Kehinde Wiley, of the verdant presidential portrait of Barack Obama; Mickalene Thomas; Cameroonian photographer Samuel Fosso; early 20th-century artist Bill Traylor, who was born into slavery; rising British talent Larry Achiampong; 2017 Turner Prize-winner Lubaina Himid; Isaac Julien – the list goes on and on and on. We visited Shonibare in his studio to discuss the trans-formative promise and deceptively simple power of beauty as political resistance.

**Tell us about the show – what's it about?**

"Talisman" is a form of magic, and the 'age of

difference" is mainly referring to the social awareness now, with Black Lives Matter, and how people are proud in their own difference. In a way, this show is happening in a context of the current social and political resistance. But at the same time, it's a celebration of aesthetics and the contribution of Africa generally. You go back to Picasso, and African artists had a huge impact within modernist art practice. **Did this idea of the talisman come first, or did the works inform it?**

I think the works came first. It's me thinking, okay, who am I going to have in the show? And then thinking, actually they have something in common. They have the transformation of materials in common. Some of the works are incredibly beautiful, but yet they're political. How do I marry those things? What would be suitable to express the intangible aspects of the work, the spiritual nature of it, plus the political?

Artists are now not trying to hide who they are. I mean, they are very proud to say, "I'm a female artist, I'm interested in feminism and I want to make work about it." And I think that should be encouraged, that people should not be shy of their historical heritage. So it's a political statement in a way. I mean the entire show is a political statement, it's about celebrating difference. But of course, more importantly, it's about celebrating really beautiful works. And then there are questions around aesthetics: **can something beautiful be radical? Can it be political?**

**What makes something a talisman?** In a sense, all artworks as objects have a kind of aura around them. Historically, people feel that African culture cast some kind of spell on them, so it's a play on that. But it's also suggesting a deliberate focus on the magical side, because when people talk

ART

about African art or artists of African origin, they always think purely in political terms. I wanted to elevate the conversation beyond that. Take it into the area of the sublime and the beautiful and the spellbinding, rather than just focusing on dry, simplistic protests. Of course, out of that magic comes a form of protest, but it's not solely protest, it's also about what it has in its essence.

**Do you think we're lacking this sense of magic today?** No, I think artists have always been dealing with the intangible and the sublime. Maybe mainstream culture isn't, but artists primarily – artists, after all, are alchemists – are in the job of transformation of the ordinary, and they seek the extraordinary out of that. I think what happens sometimes with conceptual art is a denial of beauty. But actually, I'm affirming beauty as a deliberate political stance.

**What's political about beauty, specifically the beauty that's being presented within the works of these artists?** I think the political aspect of it is the deliberate difference. Not using conventional materials deliberately. Not wanting to follow some trajectory of Western artistry. Choosing your own materials and making up your own mind. **Does beauty offer us a different strategy of resistance?**

I think you're right to choose your own taste and to choose your own aesthetics. It's a political right. I think politics can be expressed in everything. It can be expressed in the clothes you wear, it can be expressed in what you eat. It's how you choose to live your life, rather than following what other people say you should be doing. It's fundamental to people's wellbeing that they don't feel coerced into doing things, and they just do what they feel comfortable doing – rather than being ashamed of who they are or the things they like.

The world of my parents was very, very different. I mean, my parents were incredibly compliant because they had to be. We belong to a generation where we don't want to be compliant. All the deference towards authority? It becomes manipulative and oppressive if a culture of one group has to then be adhered to by everybody else... I'd make a terrible white man, you know, so why bother? (laughs) So I think that's what the show's about.

**What do you think is the most pressing concern at the moment?**

Well, I'd be a bit worried about Brexit, you know. (laughs) The politicians don't seem to know what's going on themselves. So how are we supposed to know? I'm also concerned whether the politicians will handle this responsibly, rather than the point-scoring way they seem to be handling a very, very serious issue. I don't think people quite understand the impact if it's not handled properly.

Wolfgang (Tillmans) has been very vocal and very big on this. And I think in the art world it may affect us disproportionately, because the

freedom people have to move around will go if they stop freedom of movement. And that can be very damaging for culture – if artists can't actually go and have cultural exchanges and so on.

**Does art have an implicit political role or responsibility?**

No. Obviously every kind of gesture you make is a choice and your context will inform the choices you make. So even if you were being

deliberately unpolitical, that's informed by the situation you're in. It's actually not possible to make nonpolitical art. Even if you were making an abstract work, why are you doing that? There's a reason for it. So I don't think you can actually escape it.

**Does the resistance arising through diverse representations of beauty ultimately promote freedom or choice?**

Well, the ugly can be beautiful too, so the work can be very dark but be incredibly beautiful. I wouldn't be narrow about it – I don't expect people to just produce literally beautiful work, do you know what I mean?

**Is the talisman fundamentally resistant, in the way that its magic operates by its own set of laws and happens through some kind of mechanism that we don't fathom?**

Yeah, but then I like the mysterious nature of the word "talisman". Because we think we know what it means, but then we don't. Or each person has a different interpretation of it, which I think allows the show to be open-ended. As far as I'm concerned, a work that's not entirely closed is more successful. One that has that slight open-endedness about it can be interpreted or read on a number of levels. Because a work of art is not an instruction manual. A work that looks like an instruction manual is just journalism, it's not really art. **'Talisman in the Age of Difference' is at Stephen Friedman, London.**



# THE TRANSMITTER

PHILOSOPHY

Kickass graphic novelist and writer WARREN ELLIS on modern myths, our post-truth landscape, and why Nietzsche would have been 'fucking great at Twitter'

*Everyone is in some form of existential crisis, and it's no surprise. We have a guilt-ridden addiction to our screens, our thumbs are sore from the scroll and our minds are like an overflowing mailbox. It used to be the unknown future that was terrifying; now it's the present. I spoke with Warren Ellis at How the Light Gets In, a philosophy and music festival in a small town called Hay in Wales. Ellis is a cerebral, award-winning English comic book writer and novelist (Transmetropolitan, RED, Gun Machine), and we talked about the power of narrative in the information age. With a weathered character, an emphatic voice and an absorbent mind, Ellis is a natural storyteller. He is not intimidating – he is curious and wise. If science fiction stories are transmissions of what the future may hold, then Ellis is a transmitter, the carrier signal of the present.*

**Marshall McLuhan said: "We look at the present through a rear-view mirror. We march backward into the future." Can science fiction help us through the conundrum of modern times?**

Science fiction does away with the rear-view mirror, which is why it is a difficult literature for some people to get into, because it somehow feels unanchored.

All pure science fiction is about the present day of the world. It's about the human condition as it is today. It's using speculations of the future as a tool with which to examine where we are now and where to go forward. Science fiction is not a literature of prediction – sometimes it happens, but that's purely by accident. It is the early warning weather station for culture.

**So science fiction is like a modern-day myth? A warning for things to come?**

Yes, science fiction works similarly to myth. It wants to transmit knowledge. Human beings dramatised everything. The earliest myths are about the shapes we think we see in (the stars) and the stories they tell as they wheel through the sky, which leads inexorably to navigation. If you recognise the stars and how they move through the sky, you can navigate past them.

Myth and science fiction are fantastical stories about where we're going. They're about transmitting knowledge for you to navigate your way there or away from the future.

**How do you get people to pay attention to these warning signs when attention spans are those of fruit flies?** Drama and conflict. How did sailors on the Danube teach people to avoid the terrible outcrop on the river that would suck people in? They created the story of the Siren, a navigational war myth to warn people of this outcropping of rocks. Science fiction works in similar ways. (Orwell's) *1984* and (Huxley's) *Brave New World* are the warning signs to avoid the rocks.

**Do you think social media platforms like Twitter are ruining the form of storytelling and the transmission of knowledge?**

Twitter is not a million miles away from when philosophers would write aphorisms and collect them into a book. Nietzsche would've been fucking great at Twitter. Of course, when he still had all his marbles and it wasn't all psychedelics and syphilis.

**You wrote 'Transmetropolitan' in the late 90s. Its infamous gonzo journalist Spider Jerusalem would spout prophetic sayings like "Lies are news and the Truth is obsolete". Is finding "the truth" still relevant in an age of echo-chambers?** Everything goes in cycles, and there are times where the concept of truth is relativised

out of existence by the right or the left because it's inconvenient, because it's difficult, because you think you're reaching a higher plane by denying there's no such thing as an objective truth. We're in the post-truth landscape where we've been for three or four years, and being true or being right doesn't matter any more. Michael Gove said (after Brexit) that what we've witnessed is the end of experts, which ties right back to Glenn Beck in the States six or seven years ago saying: "You could listen to experts, or you could search your feelings and know what's right."

**What are the ramifications of this end of expertise?**

We've seen it. Every expert under the sun said Brexit would be a disaster, and yet... This is the dark side of telling stories. Every political campaign is about who tells the better story, to some extent. Brexit simply told a better story. Donald Trump simply told a better story, a more affecting story, a more emotional story. And emotions, particularly in this time and place, tend to short-circuit logic. (Trump's campaign) was a story of resistance. Trump said, on the other side, you have a clearly corrupt person married to a clearly corrupt person who are part of this American dynasty that believe they should be in power just because of who they are. You know, it

wasn't dumb, and they framed their antagonist very well. "Lock her up. Lock her up."

**So we are completely unaware of how much we are affected by strong narratives. That's a bit scary.**

There's an argument to be had around the term "media literacy". Media literacy should be the study of how transmitted stories work on us. But most of America would consider themselves to be media-literate because they know what Twitter is. But they cannot, in a post-truth era, recognise an obvious lie in the way that lies are currently dressed up.

**How do you get people to be present to something they are blind to?**

Well, you can go to the word everyone hates, which is "education". In America, it's taken to mean elites from on high teaching you shit you're not interested in because they're better than you. So you've got to start by reframing the term "education"... Get out of your own silos and cross-pollinate. **WORDS BY TESS GRUENBERG / PHOTO OF WARREN BY ELLEN J ROGERS**

**THIS IS AMERICA A FEW REASONS PEOPLE HAVE CALLED THE COPS ON BLACK PEOPLE LATELY**

- Waiting in Starbucks
- Napping in a Yale dorm
- Renting an Airbnb
- Golfing at Grandview Golf Club
- Shopping at Nordstrom Rack
- Buying a belt at Barneys NY
- BB gun shopping at Walmart
- Wearing a hoodie in the rain
- Barbecuing in a park in Oakland
- Being an eight-year-old girl selling water on the street
- Being a firefighter doing his damn job (city-mandated home inspections)

**How do you parse philosophy in a way that allows for action?** I teach at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge. I call it the "Evil Cambridge". We teach continental philosophy. Our student demographic is first-generation students, lots of people of colour and lots of women. The biggest thing is not to get them to read but to get them to believe they can work with what they read. I don't understand the point of even understanding something – it's what you do with it. If you can understand one or two sentences, then use those sentences and do something with them.

**So how do you use your philosophy?** I am really interested in getting rid of human exceptionalism, bullsh\*t and I think the way way anthropocentrism operates in via modes and systems of perception that are entirely human. I use ecology (a "philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium") and what

**In the age of the selfie, how does one go about making subversive art?**

Social media have returned us to a Laramian understanding of desire, which is just the need for validation. It's a perpetual "mirror stage". Making art is about unmaking yourself. Good activism is the same thing. That's why I have a problem with identity politics, because it's about self-validation, it's ideological; therefore, it is only important insofar as it is about creating space for the other that doesn't need to respond, that doesn't need to thank you. (Art) should not be there to confirm or affirm. It shouldn't be there to impose; it should be there to propose. We need escape routes from humanism. Art does that because art's responsibility is not obligated to systems that already exist. Art has an obligation to create new lines of flight.

**What do you say to people who claim philosophy is a passive form of resistance?**

People are told that philosophy is for philosophers, and they don't understand that everything I think intersectionality is only important insofar as it is about creating space for the other that doesn't need to respond, that doesn't need to thank you. (Art) should not be there to confirm or affirm. It shouldn't be there to impose; it should be there to propose. We need escape routes from humanism. Art does that because art's responsibility is not obligated to systems that already exist. Art has an obligation to create new lines of flight.

**HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM FAKE NEWS**

- Does the headline sound unrealistic? Don't believe everything that you read.
- Check the URL. Does it have odd suffixes or substitutions?
- Check the author's credentials. Skip anonymous news reports.
- Make sure the headline and/or picture matches the content.
- Consult and compare competing sources. Fact-check stories with sites like Snopes, Politic and Politifact.
- Dig deeper. Follow up on cited sources and quotes.
- Beware online "filter bubbles" that show you only items that are similar to items you have liked.
- Be open-minded. Ask questions.
- Set fire to your computer.



**Philosopher, feminist and queer theorist PATRICIA MacCORMACK on philosophy, art as activism and welcoming the apocalypse**

Patricia MacCormack thinks we should welcome the apocalypse. "We've had enough chances as a species and the earth would be better off without us." MacCormack is a beacon for all those who desire to marry theory and action. She walks the talk and believes adamantly in the power of philosophy and art to resist systematic, oppressive forces, human species included.

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**WORDS BY CALLIE HITCHCOCK**



CLIMATE CHANGED

"If a few years of campaigning is enough to convince the pope we need to keep fossil fuels in the ground, a few more quarters might finally persuade the suits that there's more money to be made elsewhere." – Bill McKibben, 350.org

**FLESH AS FANTASY**

PAINTING

Angie Quick is a Canadian painter, curator and performance artist based in London, Ontario, and a self-taught, sex-positive female artist confronting the ideals of the feminist gaze. Typically, in art, women illustrating sex positivity are classified as playing into the binary of the whore/mother. As much as it is important to demonstrate feminist strength, there is still a play of optical dynamics of glamorising or glossing over sexual imagery, equating it to pornography or taking back their image from a male spectator. As can be seen in her paintings 'What is the Weight of the Female Body' and 'After the Funeral', Quick is not intending to glorify the idea of women taking back their bodies for their own game, she is allowing for raw acceptance of sexual



**Canadian artist ANGIE QUICK is redefining female sexual freedom in the modern age**

choice. A few years ago, you were painting self-images that related to an idea of visually expressive sexuality. Do you see yourself entering further into a psyche of sexual choice?

Within my early paintings, I specifically depicted myself – which I do not call self-portraits. I painted images of myself in various themes reminiscent of classical roles and poses. This line of thought has transitioned and carried over to my photo-diary series. While still maintaining a conscious play on self, specifically in my photo-diary work such as 'While on Vacation', 'I Never Missed You', and 'House, Home and Hustler'. In the first, I created surprise photo-picks which contained 8x10 photo prints of me on my summer 'vacation'. Within 'House, Home and Hustler', I format my 'life' into a magazine layout juxtaposing myself with personal objects. It is an intimate portrait of my life in objects and I seem to play an ever changing role in these

interiors. My paintings shifted toward more anonymous flesh – drawing directly from pornography. I began to use these images as what I call 'modern nude in dialogue with the classical nude'.

I utilised pornography for its prominent undercurrent within modern life. The pieces dealt with flesh as fantasy, memory and desire while also eliciting ideas of meat and battle. Explorations into depicting sexuality are fuelled by social constructs made to put restraints on the female body. How do you as an artist overcome these restrictions? Through realising that sex and sexuality and desire and my "woman-ness" was something that could be torn down and remoulded. That I could actively engage with these ideas and feelings by being vulnerable and incredibly critical of myself and my environment. A few years ago, the Canadian

justice system changed the law regarding sex work: now women are placed in more danger because their clients can be charged with a criminal offence, and it seems as though women cannot remove themselves from society's watchful eye. Your work fragments sexual encounters, placing emphasis on the nature of the sex act. Can your work be viewed as a celebration of bodies in ecstasy?

The lumping of flesh into odd substructures almost like an altar or shrine demands the viewer place sex into a realm of ideas, or recontextualise place and feeling. Humor is also a very important part of my work – playing on preconceived ideas and skewing them, while also allowing moments of uncomfortable to be playful. How can we make meaningful connections in art, when the surface appeal foreshadows

the inner workings of intimacy? An important part of my work and the way I live my life as an artist is through imbued meaning. To get at the feeling, to capture the ineffable. It is important that the work lives outside of me, leaving space for the emotive – to allow the viewer to slip in. In many of my works, scale and luscious brushstrokes, or – in my poetry – the use of rhythm create meaning by their succession: they seduce and wink at the viewer. As women, how can we expand these connections to include a healthy conversation about sexual appetite when the majority of us have experienced traumatic episodes relating to our sexualised bodies? All art made by a minority is work made in crisis – it is a continual attempt to find an undefined space; it is work to actively retrieve something that is innately one's own, and unknowing what that looks or feels like. It is a stumble and dance and yet firm stance for truth – a recontextualising of beauty. **WORDS BY JENNIFER LORRAINE FRASER**

